

A Practical Guide to Building Local Government

THE POLISH EXPERIENCE

JERZY REGULSKI

*translated by
Annemarie Haar
and William Haar*



Foundation in Support of Local Democracy

A Practical Guide to Building Local Government

The Polish Experience

By

Jerzy Regulski

Translated by

Annemarie Haar and William Haar



Local Government
and Public Service
Reform Initiative

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM INITIATIVE
OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE–BUDAPEST

Address

Október 6 utca 12
H–1051 Budapest, Hungary

Mailing address

P.O. Box 519
H–1357 Budapest, Hungary

Telephone

(36-1) 882-3104

Fax

(36-1) 882-3105

E-mail

lgprog@osi.hu

Web Site

<http://lgi.osi.hu/>

First published in 2010
by Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative, Open Society Institute–Budapest
© OSI/LGI, 2010



TM and Copyright © 2010 Open Society Institute
All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978 963 9419 19 4



OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE

The publication of these country reports has been funded by the
Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative of the Open Society Institute–Budapest.

The judgments expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of LGI.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or
by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and
recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Copies of the book can be ordered by e-mail or post from LGI.

Managing Editor: Tom Bass

Cover photo: © Witold Krassowski | Panos | 2010

Printed in Budapest, Hungary, 2010

Design & Layout: Judit Kovács | Createch Ltd.

Contents

Introduction	v
Part One:	
General Remarks and Recommendations	1
1. The Necessity of Self-government	3
2. Basic Notions: Local Self-government and Decentralization.....	4
3. Establishing the Goals of the Reform	9
4. Conflicts and Resistance to Change	14
5. The Mechanism of Change	20
6. Guidelines to Decentralization Programs	23
Part Two:	
Steps of the Reform	29
The Structure of the Process	31
Step I. Conceptualization.....	35
A. Politics	35
B. Participants of the Remaining Spheres.....	40
Step II. Design and Approval.....	41
A. Politics	41
B. Legislation.....	47
C. Central Administration	53
D. Local Governments	59
E. Nongovernmental and Professional Organizations.....	60
F. Research	67

Step III. Implementation	73
A. Politics	73
B. Legislation.....	74
C. Central Administration	75
D. Local Government.....	78
E. Nongovernmental and Professional Organizations.....	82
F. Research	85
 Step IV. Consolidation	 87
The Character of the Process.....	87
A. Politics	89
B. Legislation.....	91
C. Central Administration	92
D. Local Governments	95
E. Nongovernmental and Professional Organizations.....	101
F. Research	107
 Part Three:	
Assisting the Reform.....	111
 A Conclusion	 125
 Appendices.....	 127
Appendix 1. Calendar of Polish reforms	127
Appendix 2. Foundation in Support of Local Democracy.....	129
 About the Author.....	 131
 Index of Terms	 133

Introduction

Self-governance is the foundation of every democratic state. Its construction is essential to both the development of the state and its population's exercise of their civil rights. Building a self-governance system is inevitable. But reforms are very difficult. The changes they bring about impact almost every aspect of public life and are felt throughout the entire country. Hundreds of thousands of people take part in their implementation and the entire population will feel their effects.

Poland was the first post-communist country in which self-government was rebuilt. Today, with the perspective and experience of the last twenty years,¹ it is possible to make some assessments and conclusions. I personally took part in the implementation of these reforms and wondered if there had been a better way to achieve them. Is it possible to avoid some common mistakes and achieve greater success? The fruit of these reflections is this guide to the Polish experience: How to do the reform? It is not enough to know **what** you want to achieve. You have to know **how** to achieve it. I hope that readers of this book will be able to find the answer to that question.

This guidebook is divided into three parts.

- In the first part, some general remarks and recommendations are presented. Self-governance reform is not a simple, technical procedure of repairing minor fragments of administration. It is a comprehensive rebuilding of the political and administrative establishment, which greatly influences the development of society as well as the economy. This is often overlooked.
- The second part deals solely with the implementation of reforms. Tasks are assigned to the various actors in the political sphere, in the legislature, in central and local administrations, as well as in nonprofit, professional, and research organizations. Every step of the reform's implementation is different, yet together they form a coherent and mutually determined whole. No step can be omitted.
- The third part is devoted to foreign assistance, a crucial element. But foreign assistance must be managed according to certain guidelines in order for it to be effective. These guidelines are presented in this final section.

1. For a description of self-governance reforms in Poland, see: Jerzy Regulski (2003), *Local Government Reform in Poland: An Insider's Story*, Budapest: Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative, Open Society Institute.

Obviously, certain situations may require different solutions. Therefore, the assigned tasks in this guidebook should be seen as suggestions and recommendations rather than directives.

The nature of this book requires a considerably abbreviated text, therefore much analysis and substantiation has been eliminated. In order for the text not to suffer as a result, I have included examples of my experiences and reflections, some of which are very personal. It should be understood that most of these examples are related to reforms in Poland.

With this work I hope to slightly ease the great labor of building local self-government, and I wish my readers success with this endeavor, which is so important to all of us.

Jerzy Regulski

PART ONE

General Remarks and Recommendations

1. The Necessity of Self-government

The transformation of an authoritarian state into a democratic state is not simply about establishing free elections. It requires a comprehensive rebuilding of the entire state system, including the method of governing public affairs and the participation of citizens in public life.

In authoritarian governments, such as those of communist states, the state and its administrative apparatus serve not only to govern but also to control citizens and to force them into behaviors mandated by the political authorities. In a democratic nation, in contrast, citizens are expected to understand the state to be basically good, because its very purpose and reason for existence is to create conditions for the unrestricted development of its citizens. The state is understood to be subsidiary in relationship to its citizens, as opposed to that of a superior entity. So in the move from an authoritarian to a democratic state, far-reaching administrative reforms must be enacted; indeed, they are imperative because their realization is a condition for building democracy.

The organization of a democratic state must facilitate the participation of citizens in the wielding of power. The central administration should deal with issues that individual people or social groups cannot solve themselves. However, local authorities, which ought to be composed of community representatives, should assume responsibility over as many affairs as possible. This means that one of the most fundamental tasks during the state's transformation is its decentralization and the expansion of local self-government. Although it may take many forms, local democracy is the basis for every democratic state.

The decentralization of the state and the rebuilding of self-government have critical significance for the development of international cooperation. The foundation of this cooperation is mutual trust between states, and this trust can only exist between stable countries, the actions of which can be anticipated. These conditions can only be met in those democratic states where citizens can have an influence on their politics. Authoritarian establishments, based on unchecked superior power, cannot guarantee this stability and pose a constant threat to other nations.

In the Council of Europe, democratic security is seen as the third pillar after economic and military security, guaranteeing security of life and development. People need political stability in their countries. This final pillar is precisely what can assure a democratic establishment. Supporting the development of democratic security, even though different terminology is often used, is the foundation of international collaboration, the fundamentals of which are aid programs.

In order for citizens to take full advantage of the opportunities of a democratic establishment, they have to become active participants in society. They need to form a civic society capable of defining its needs and participating in fulfilling them, while at the same time cultivating an awareness that individuals will be held responsible for their decisions and actions.

The rebuilding of the state's systems is a difficult process; changes affect practically all aspects of social and economic life, and people are by nature threatened and skeptical of changes. Many groups are against any reforms that might threaten their political and economic power, even to the smallest degree. As a result, some politicians fear decentralization when it limits the possibility of direct intervention in administrative and economic affairs. Many arguments are used to discourage any changes. The most popular argument is that society is not mature enough for self-government and the people are not asking for changes. These arguments are fallacious and are a result of a fear of change.

The development of a country depends above all else on the people's activities. The role of politicians is to facilitate and support the people in their initiatives. The power of the state depends on the successes of its citizens, who readily give their support when their quality of life has improved.

Local authorities, who should represent the interests of local society, have an essential role to fulfill here. The transition of a state and society from an authoritarian to a democratic establishment is a long, involved, and complicated process, one that must encompass transforming the state's system and administration as well as the evolution of society and its norms and mores. Both processes must take place concurrently and be involved with one another. Reforms need to be well prepared and executed. You cannot run from their realization. Building self-government is a demand of historical significance.

2. Basic Notions: Local Self-government and Decentralization

The development of self-government is possible only with the decentralization of a country and decentralization is possible only with self-governance. Decentralization reform automatically leads to the development of self-governance. The two processes are inextricably linked and fully understanding these ideas is essential for implementing the reform.

“Local self-government is one of the main foundations of any democratic regime,” claims the European Charter of Local Self-government, the international convention signed and ratified by all member nations of the Council of Europe. The member states have pledged that “the principle of local self-government will be recognized in domestic legislation, and where practicable, in the constitution.” It asserts that “the right of citizens to participate in the conduct of public affairs is one of the democratic principles that are shared by all member States of the Council of Europe,” and “it is at the local level that this right can be most directly exercised.”

The Charter goes on to specify the following:

“Local self-government denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population.”

“This right shall be exercised by councils or assemblies composed of members freely elected by secret ballot on the basis of direct, equal, universal suffrage, and which may possess executive organs responsible to them. This provision shall in no way affect recourse to assemblies of citizens, referendums, or any other form of direct citizen participation where it is permitted by statute.”

“Local authorities shall, within the limits of the law, have full discretion to exercise their initiative with regard to any matter which is not excluded from their competence nor assigned to any other authority.”

“Powers given to local authorities shall normally be full and exclusive. They may not be undermined or limited by another, central or regional, authority except as provided for by the law.”

“Without prejudice to more general statutory provisions, local authorities shall be able to determine their own internal administrative structures in order to adapt them to local needs and ensure effective management.”

The above assertions contained in the European Charter of Local Self-government clearly show the importance that the international community attaches to self-governance. At the same time, they clearly define the differences between local self-government and local state administration, which are present in authoritarian states. Local self-government is a system in which all residents of a given area form an association. Local authorities are executive bodies of this association and work in the name of and for it, under their own responsibility.

When we talk about local self-government, we are talking about a local power unit that:

- represents the interests of the residents and possesses a mandate stemming from their election;
- works within the framework of the law and is neither subjugated to the central administration nor to higher branches of local government;
- is subject to control by the central administration only in legality of its activities;
- has assured judicial protection of its laws and its independence;

- possesses the status of a legal entity and has liberty of management of personal property;
- possesses its own personal revenues and the right to manage finances, as well as subsidies from the central administration's budget; and
- possesses its own administrative personnel who are independent from the central administration.

The Polish Experience

Local self-government reform in Poland broke five of the fundamental monopolies of communist rule:

- **Political Monopoly.** The local government elections of 1990 were by all accounts free and fair elections that gave all citizens and social groups equal rights.
- **Monopoly of State Power.** Local authorities regained the right to fulfill public functions in their own name and by their own responsibility, and not in the name of the state. The hierarchal subjugation to the central administration, whose only remaining authority is to control adherence to the law, was eliminated. Local authorities regained judicial control over their autonomy. You now had a group of public issues that were not under the authority of the central administration.
- **Monopoly of State Property.** Municipalities regained their status as legal entities and took over a significant amount of the state's property, which they were able to freely administer. This relates to buildings, land, infrastructure, and local enterprises.
- **Financial Monopoly.** The budgets of the municipalities were set apart from the state's budget and local authorities now freely administer their own finances.
- **Monopoly of Administration.** Self-governing municipalities regained their administrative responsibilities. A new group of public servants emerged: self-government' employees.

The development of local self-government requires decentralization of the state. Decentralization is not only about transferring tasks and assets to the local authorities, but more importantly about transferring responsibility.

The transfer of tasks to subordinate units, as in the case of delegating duties to regional branches of a central institution, is not decentralization. In such cases there is no transfer of responsibilities, and the central institution will still be responsible for its

branches. For example, decentralization of education means that local government is responsible for schools and, in particular, for assuring that all children have adequate access to education. The central administration's only responsibility is to ensure that local government performs its responsibilities adequately. It does not have a right to control the manner in which local government performs its duties.

In order to evaluate local government reforms, it is critical to create a system within which the degrees of state decentralization and the development of local self-government can be seen. Such a system should embody the means for analysis of the decentralization process; otherwise, it will be impossible to assert if the decentralization process is progressing or regressing. One cannot rely on popular opinion to measure the success of the process, as they are often contradictory.

This is a complicated task. It relates to numerous incommensurate and, in most cases, immeasurable phenomena. There is no system that is widely accepted. The standard of measure most often proposed is the local government's level of engagement in revenues and public expenditures. Unfortunately, this gauge limits the notion of change, which cannot be restricted only to the management of finances.

The Polish Experience

The application of the above gauge often leads to incorrect conclusions. In Poland, the budgets of the peoples' councils, which existed under communism, were relatively large because the councils acted on behalf of the state administration. As a part of local self-government reforms, these budgets were cut because of the new division of responsibilities between local self-government and the central administration. At the same time, local authorities gained freedom in the management of these resources, while in the past they had to adhere to the directives of the central administration. Those comparing only the budgets of local governments and ignoring the degree of freedom in the management of resources could arrive at the false conclusion that, in Poland, centralization of the administration, rather than decentralization, took place.

The evaluation of the decentralization process must depend on analyzing the character and range of the local government's social, political, and economic resources as compared to the resources of the central administration. The more control local government have over them, the more decentralized the country is.

It is, however, impossible to determine, in an objective manner, those resources and the potential of local government. Such an evaluation is not possible, not only because

is it impossible to quantify these potentialities but also because there are many different ways to set up the evaluation criteria. People and social groups will always differ in opinion because they evaluate particular phenomena through the prism of their own interests and goals.

Evaluation should be focused on the analysis of the process of change. It is important to establish an initial baseline and, through the comparison of subsequent stages, determine the direction of the changes taking place. This will determine if decentralization is progressing and if established goals are being realized. Based on my experiences, the evaluation of the decentralization process requires an analysis of changes in local government resources within five spheres:

- **The political sphere**
 - Is the position of local self-government strong and independent enough that local government will be able to independently shape the development policies of its municipalities and assess the challenges it faces?
 - Can local self-government influence the central administration's process of forming conditions of operation for local government?
 - Does a mechanism for the protection of autonomy of local self-government exist?
- **The sphere of public authority**
 - What is the scope of public issues under the responsibility of local self-government?
 - What are the limitations of local autonomy?
- **The sphere of municipal property and economies**
 - Does the local self-government possess a legal status that allows it autonomous economic activities and governance of its property?
 - What is the size of the assets it has control of?
 - What is the scope of economic activities conducted by local self-government?
- **The sphere of public finances**
 - What is the scope of financial resources under control of local self-government and is it adequate to the tasks and responsibilities of the local government?
 - What is the source of the local budget revenues, or in other words, what is the ratio of local government revenues to the state subsidies?

- What degree of freedom do local governments have in spending resources obtained from their own revenues and from state subsidies and what are the limitations?
- **The sphere of administration and public servants**
 - Do local self-governments have their own administration independent from the state administration?
 - Do local self-governments have freedom in the employment, advancement, and firing of public servants and in establishment in their compensation?
 - Does the process of developing professional and effective local administration exist?

The above problems and criteria are only examples. In each case, they should be made more specific and should be closely related to the goals of the reforms.

The periodic evaluations of the undergoing changes should also contain the analysis of the mechanism that produces these changes. The capacities of local self-government do not develop solely because of the transfer of subsidies from the central administration. Local communities become stronger primarily because of their own work and activities. By accumulating skills, educating people, developing their institutions, and increasing their assets, they expand their own social and economic capacities. As a result, the power relations within the state change. The capacities of local self-government become greater in relation to capacities of the central administration because the speed of local development is often greater than the speed of state development as a whole. As a result, the state becomes more decentralized.

3. Establishing the Goals of the Reform

The first task is always the establishment of goals and the identification of the most important changes to be achieved. This task is especially important because decentralization of the state and the development of local self-government result in changes in all aspects of public life. It is crucial to establish the level of importance of individual changes and to identify the priorities because some of these changes could lead to contradictory results.

For example, a large degree of independence for local self-government creates conditions for the effective management of development. However, at the same time it facilitates the abuse of power. It is important then to find appropriate compromises between the degree of freedom and the degree of control.

It is not however the subject of this book to show the different possible goals of reforms. The political system of each country is dependent on existing conditions

stemming from tradition, culture, level of social and civic development, geographical and economic conditions, and access to technology among others. The ideological framework of the state has to be established in relation to this context, as the program of the necessary changes will depend on it.

The goals have to be realistic. Reformers have to be conscious of what they want to achieve. The establishment of overly ambitious goals is often destructive; the goals are not realized, because they cannot be achieved, and the attempt leads to frustration instead of a sense of success. Efforts become diffused, as opposed to being concentrated, and this in turn decreases one's opportunity for success. It is always better to do something, even if it's less than what was originally promised, than nothing at all. Being realistic is the tenet by which to pursue the reform.

The general goal of decentralization is to increase citizens' participation in governance. This is a very general goal, but it should be part of all reform agendas. It is the essence of the transformation process. An increase in citizens' participation will result in several secondary changes:

- Stronger connections between citizens and the state, to which citizens will have more trust
- Strengthening and stabilization of the state
- Improved fulfillment of local needs and improvement in living conditions
- Increase in the effectiveness of the management of development

Particular goals of the reforms may be concentrated in two groups.

1) **Strengthening of the state**

This requires explanation. Opponents of the reforms argue that decentralization leads to the weakening of the state. Experience, however, shows that the opposite is true.

People identify with the state more strongly when they can participate in resolution of public concerns and can influence the direction of the state's development. The state that has the trust and support of its citizens is stronger. In a decentralized state, the degree of state administration involvement is smaller. An administration that is free from many of the small and local responsibilities can focus on the effective approaches to resolving nationwide tasks and thus be more effectual. An effective administration and an improved fulfillment of social needs improve people's trust in the state. People are not only ready to closely collaborate with local officials, but are also ready to sacrifice for the general goal of further development of the country. As a result the stability of a particular

country increases, and central authorities gain the ability to make unpopular, but important, decisions for the well-being of the nation.

Decentralization and the transfer of responsibilities to regional authorities is especially important in countries where there are ethnic and cultural differences. By giving power to self-governments to act according to local needs and demands, the sources of tensions that are difficult to be addressed at the central level will be eliminated.

A good example of how to diminish such tensions is Italy, where there are quite diverse political, social, and economic traditions. This diversity was the basis for numerous separatist movements, which were particularly prevalent when uniform standards governed the whole country. When individual regions were allowed to solve problems according to their own needs, the separatist movements died down. By allowing local control, the common interests of the state could link together many diverse groups and the state as a whole was strengthened. If the Italians had instead cemented the uniform administrative decrees, separatism would have been strengthened and could possibly have threatened the unity of the state.

2) Satisfying the needs of the inhabitants

As a result of decentralization, local institutions make decisions that are tightly tied to the actual needs and expectations of the people. Towns and other municipalities form a complex system, the functioning and development of which can be effectively controlled by local authorities alone. Direct management becomes considerably more effective. The result of these two factors is that greater social satisfaction can be attained with the same resources.

The provision of financial independence to local governments means that they can obtain substantial resources outside of the state budget from:

- people who are eager to collaborate with local authorities if they have an influence on the decision-making process,
- enterprises as a part of a public-private partnership, and
- banks providing credit to local budgets.

As a result of decentralization, local authorities have at their disposal greater resources and have a better ability to meet the needs of the population. This results in greater trust in local government and an increased willingness of society to continue collaborating.

The Polish Experience

A comparison of the development of the water supply and sewage systems in Poland in the decades before and after the 1990 reforms may serve as a good illustration of the results of decentralization. In the 1980s, 328,000 houses were linked to municipal water supply systems. This figure rose 700 percent to 2,192,000 in the 1990s. At the same time, sewage connections increased by 1,000 percent. This is a result of better management as well as broader access to financing sources.

The nature of the reforms is shaped by the role local self-governance is to play in the state. Several questions must be asked to identify this role. Here, we will focus on only two of them, knowing that within each particular question there will actually be many more. The first question addresses the size of the particular unit that will be administered by local self-government. Local self-government is created not only to execute public authority, but also to oversee management of the assets and resources belonging to local communities. By deciding upon the nature of the local self-government, a decision regarding its size is also being made. Small units encourage citizen participation in decision-making processes, as it is easier to create strong local linkages on a smaller scale. Smaller units are not, however, able to independently resolve many of the economic obstacles that can arise or to build their own technical infrastructure. Therefore, they are forced to limit the scale of their responsibilities and pass larger projects on to larger administrative units or create unions with other similarly sized units.

Larger units have a much greater ability to meet the needs of their inhabitants than smaller units. At the same time, the distance between the citizen and the authorities increases and direct participation by citizens is more difficult in a larger unit. There is no answer as to which of the two approaches is better. The appropriate decision depends upon local traditions and existing administrative divisions. Small municipalities, for example, exist in France, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. In Poland, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries the basic units of local self-government are larger, and are therefore able to undertake a greater scope of tasks and responsibilities.

The second question regards the scope of the economic activities local self-governments are allowed to undertake. The answers tend to oscillate between two extreme models. According to the first model, local self-government can engage in economic activities only if they are connected directly with delivering public services. Its revenues should come solely from taxes, never from commercial activities. Local self-government should create favorable conditions for private entrepreneurs. Local self-government

should not engage directly in business, as such involvement inevitably leads it to become a competitor with the very entrepreneurs it has been mandated to support.

The second model allows local self-government to engage in profit-oriented activities. The obtained revenues can support local budgets and thus increase independence. Both models have their pros and cons, and an appropriate compromise needs to be formed on an individual basis.

The Polish Experience

As a part of the communalization of assets in Poland, local self-government took over local commercial enterprises. As a result, municipalities became engaged in economic activities that went beyond delivering public services. The privatization of trade and services introduced a new economic reality that was more transparent and understandable. Society was able to see the positive effects of a market economy.

The transfer of many enterprises to local self-government became one of the ways the state monopoly was crushed. Allowing local self-government to generate revenues created incentives for new initiatives and an opportunity to break citizens' passivity. If such activities are forbidden, it will be seen as an attempt to limit the independence of local communities.

The degree of decentralization in a country has a decisive impact on the overall program of the reforms, and on the method of their implementation in particular. When a political regime changes, the new authorities take over a fully centralized state. The existing local administration needs to be eliminated and replaced by new local self-governance. When some decentralization reforms have already taken place, and the goal of the reform is to further deepen and strengthen local self-governing authorities, a different approach is needed. The answer to the question, "Is the purpose of the reform to create a new system of local-self-governance or is it to decentralize the existing system?" has critical importance for the process of the reforms. In both cases, the role of the local authorities will be drastically different. In the first case, they will resist change, while in the second instance they will be its greatest supporters.

The Polish Experience

This problem was apparent during the implementation of the reforms in Poland. In 1990, when self-governance was introduced at the local level, the main opponent to change was the existing administration inherited from the communist era. Reforms had to be introduced against the opposition of the local state administrations and the people connected to them, who did everything possible to halt the reforms. Later stages of the reforms were implemented under different circumstances. Local authorities already existed and they represented a significant force that strengthened the development of self-governance.

An appropriate identification of the reform's goals is a fundamental condition of its success.

4. Conflicts and Resistance to Change

The course of the decentralization process is a result of both design and the consequences of unexpected events. Each reform encounters challenges and creates conflicts. Compromises are necessary.

People usually hold two sets of attitudes regarding local self-government reform: support and understanding of the general need for the state's transformation, and a distrust of specific proposed changes. Societies are often conservative and crave stability above all else. The population will only embrace the reforms when everyday difficulties become untenable and they believe the reforms will solve their problems. At the same time, the population has little to no experience with the functioning of the decentralized state. It is difficult for people to support a reform that they do not understand.

To avoid strong social resistance to the reforms, the population must simultaneously be very unsatisfied with the current situation and have hope for the future. The reform's program of implementation should take these sentiments into account in order to ease social resistance.

The Polish Experience

However, there are situations when society not only seeks or expects change, but also demands it. In such situations any reasonable proposition will meet social approval, especially when people trust the initiators of the reforms. In order to benefit from such support, reforms should start as quickly as they can be adequately prepared.

We were confronted with such a situation in Poland. The overall demand for change and removal of the communist administration created strong support for speedy reforms. As a result of many years of prior research conducted by the opposition, a plan for the reforms already existed. When the democratic opposition took over, new political leaders decided to undertake the reforms and used the historic “five minutes” that emerged after 1989. The positive motivations were stronger than fear.

The process of gaining social acceptance for reform encompasses three clear stages:

- Comprehension of the content and reasons for change
- Their acceptance
- Readiness to support them

If people do not understand the proposed changes, it is impossible to gain social support for them and the reforms are destined to fail. The population must understand the reasons behind the reforms, as new laws can alter customs and threaten commonly accepted interests and values. The outcome could be a boycott of the new laws or an emergence of resistance movements. It is also possible that people will understand the proposed legislation and accept the need for it, but will resist supporting or adhering to it. As a result, the new laws will be ineffectual.

The Polish Experience

Laws limiting the speed of vehicles on public roads can be used as an example of this last point. Everybody understands these laws and the majority accepts them as necessary safety precautions. Yet nobody obeys them. While these regulations may be justified, they remain ineffectual because they are ignored by society. Attempts to impose unwanted reforms in Poland and other countries during the communist period ended several times in mass protests when tensions mounted dangerously.

Reforms generate many conflicts. Each reform changes the power and situation of many people and institutions and alters their access to public resources. Some individuals and groups become more influential—and often financially enriched—while others lose their status. The first group will support reforms, while the second will oppose them. The result of these shifts is conflict, with the process of reform becoming a continuous power struggle.

The conflicts associated with reform are wide-ranging and dependent on local conditions. Political, social, and professional groups, along with public administrations, local governments, trade unions, and others, may be engaged. These conflicts can relate to a general social or political framework, but could also focus on specific concerns. Successful reform depends upon the ability to not only forecast such conflicts, but also to resolve them before they escalate.

There are three basic groups of conflicts stemming from local self-government reform:

- 1) Conflicts over power and political influence
- 2) Conflicts over assets
- 3) Conflicts over access to public funds

- 1) **Conflicts over power and political influence** emerge most frequently between the central administration and local self-government institutions when the latter assume new responsibilities and tasks. These are very difficult conflicts because many different interest groups are involved, some of whom veil their influence behind other institutions. Resolution of such conflicts often requires compromise.

The Polish Experience

During the local self-government reforms in Poland, many different conflicts emerged. The most well-known was the conflict over the decentralization of education. Those opposed to local self-government assuming responsibility for schools included:

- The central administration, which was losing control over schools, especially the ability to appoint personnel,
- Trade unions, especially those leaders whose status was dependent on their ability to negotiate working conditions at the central level, and
- Older, conservative teachers who worried about the consequences of new working conditions.

Supporting decentralization were:

- Local authorities,
- Parents, who gained greater influence over the educational process, and
- Younger, active teachers, who wanted to introduce new innovative teaching methods but were limited by traditional colleagues.

Conflicts over power and political influence can emerge between different institutions and social groups. They are difficult to anticipate as interests can collide at unexpected moments.

The Polish Experience

In 1989, a conflict emerged between local citizens' committees and the trade union Solidarity. The opposition won that year's parliamentary elections due to thousands of people organizing in citizens' committees. It was expected that these committees would be used to develop a political base for further support of the transformation of government, particularly local elections. However, Lech Wałęsa unexpectedly ordered the dissolution of these committees immediately after the elections. The committees were seen as a threat to the regional authorities of Solidarity, which wanted to play a major political role. Wałęsa's decision was a major setback to the emergence of local self-government. This was the trade union's first conflict with the movement supporting decentralization.

2) **Conflicts over assets** emerge when the transfer of public resources to local government takes place. The emerging conflicts are:

- between central and local institutions regarding the scope of such transfers;
- among local authorities over the division of public assets that were centrally controlled (for example, a conflict may emerge regarding control over infrastructure that serves several communities); and
- between local authorities and nongovernmental institutions or enterprises that want to enlarge their assets or protect their resources.

The Polish Experience

Many conflicts over assets emerged in Poland; the majority related to local concerns. They were resolved through compromise, or by administrative or judicial process. Dividing public service enterprises that had served several municipalities caused the most conflicts, many of which lasted several years. There were also nationwide conflicts. The most prominent was over garden allotments. The National Federation of Allotment Gardeners attempted to take over all the land that contained allotment gardens, despite the fact that such a move would challenge the tenets of the decentralization reform. This attempt was successful thanks to the political engagement of several parties.

- 3) **Conflicts over access to public funds** emerge when the required reform of public finances take place. They appear primarily between central institutions that are overseeing state finances and local authorities that demand a greater share in state revenues in order to reflect the scope of their newly undertaken tasks and responsibilities. In addition, conflicts can occur between local authorities regarding state subventions.

The Polish Experience

Poland also saw conflicts of interest between authorities from different municipalities. A constant point of conflict was the level of dues paid to the Equalization Fund, which is used to equalize revenues between rich and poor municipalities. There were also local conflicts. One such dispute was between “spa” municipalities and highly industrialized ones. “Spa” municipalities wanted to charge fees to those coming to their areas for medical treatment and vacations. Their reasoning was that the healthy air of their municipalities was their central good and that they should receive payment for it. Industrial municipalities argued that their residents should not pay for something as public as “fresh air.”

The most common adversaries of decentralization are usually the following:

- **The central administration.** This is an obvious opponent, as decentralization will limit its rights, and thus its power and privileges. In a decentralized state, the central institutions do not govern by issuing commands. Instead, they steer the power of the local authorities in the desired direction using a different set of legal and economic tools. This is difficult and requires great effort.
- **The fiscal administration,** which usually plays a very negative role. Decentralization means that the central government will lose control over a significant portion of public finances, and therefore it vigorously fights to prevent such a loss.
- **Politicians at the central level.** Decentralization limits the scope of activities of the central administration. Therefore politicians lose their opportunity to influence directly or informally a huge amount of administrative decisions.
- **The leadership of enterprises and institutions** that are taken over by local authorities. They worry that they will lose their influence, independence, and prestige. Managers of public enterprises usually have a lot of independence, as the execution of ownership rights in the name of the state is largely a formality and there is little direct supervision. Seen in this light, supervision by local authorities could be understood as a new way to limit managerial independence, though this supervision usually yields more effective results. Additionally, the perception of one's status often plays a critical role here. The director of the enterprise sees himself as more important if he is supervised by a minister rather than by a mayor.

The Polish Experience

Doctors employed by state companies managing "spa" municipalities were against the proposed transfer of those companies to local government and formed a typical opposition. They believed that contracts made with the ministry were far more prestigious than those with the mayor.

- **Trade unions.** The power of the unions rests with their ability to represent large numbers of employees in specific sectors to central authorities with whom they have to negotiate their working conditions. Decentralization leads to the limitation of the central authority's power in this regard. Union leaders lose negotiation partners at the central level as local authorities step in. This requires the decentralization of trade unions, which leads to the decline of their political power and especially

diminishes the role of their national leaders. The conservatism of trade unions is widespread and can be dangerous for the state and society.

The Polish Experience

A dramatic example of the consequences of trade unions' resistance to reform can be found in the history of the port of Liverpool. This large port serving much of the British Empire went through a major crisis in the 1960s. The management of the port decided to modernize by introducing new equipment that could service shipping containers. This step towards efficiency would have led to a 20 percent reduction in employment. Trade unions protested effectively and the modernization effort was halted. Consequently, a port that could accommodate containers was built elsewhere, and within several years, 50—not 20—percent of workers were fired from the original dock.

The opponents of decentralization continuously change, and which institution or vested interest they represent depends on the situation in a particular country. Opposition can expand as decentralization effects the interest of many political and professional groups. The execution of the reforms must take this opposition into account and overcome it. The methods of achieving this must be diverse. It is necessary to negotiate and look for compromises or to eliminate opponents through political or legislative routes.

5. The Mechanism of Change

How should the reform be conducted in order to be successful, given that it has so many enemies? The answer to this question should serve as the basis for the implementation plan. It is necessary that there are conditions conducive to the implementation of the reform and that a political and social mechanism supporting reform exists.

The fundamental preconditions are shaped by four basic factors, which have to coexist simultaneously in order for the reform to be successful:

The leaders' political will, or a clear desire to conduct reforms, is critical. Political will cannot be ostensible and limited only to proclamations. Leaders have to be ready to act, to overcome challenges, and to undertake risks. They have to believe that the implementation of the reforms is needed and that its execution will bring benefits for the state and society, and citizens' satisfaction will result in greater support for the political structure that the leaders represent. The success of the reform will be a success for both politicians and for the state.

The knowledge of experts is indispensable for defining goals and achieving them in specific ways. Without this knowledge, one cannot plan the reform and overcome the emerging challenges. Obtaining such knowledge requires research and close cooperation with academic institutions.

Citizens' support, or at the very least permission to introduce change, is the third factor. Society has to recognize the need for change and understand its meaning. Citizens have to be convinced that the reform will bring tangible improvements to their quality of life. Only at that point will reforms gain social support. Without this support, the reforms will not bring about the expected results.

Human resources, individuals qualified and motivated to implement and consolidate the reforms, are the fourth and final factor. Decentralization and development of local government requires several thousand people to implement and apply new legal regulations. The success of the reforms will be evaluated based on the benefits gained by society. If people, who have not been prepared professionally to execute the reforms, a negative outcome can be expected.

Meeting these four preconditions should be the key task in the reform's preparatory process. All of these conditions must take place simultaneously. If some are absent, the reform process will be slowed, halted, or possibly even abandoned.

The Polish Experience

This series of preconditions was experienced in Poland in 1990, when the first step of local government reform was implemented within general political change. Society wanted reforms, political leaders wanted to achieve them as quickly as possible, and the research conducted over the previous decade provided both the appropriate knowledge and plan for execution. The general enthusiasm of society compensated for the lack of human resources. These preconditions were also present in 1998 during the second step. The need for the further expansion of local government was obvious. After eight years of operation, local municipalities had gained practical knowledge and trained their human resources. Both reforms ended in success.

However, in 1993, an attempt to introduce a change failed. The attitude of the government was then uncertain and experts did not possess a coherent plan of action. Only after a certain period did the government acknowledge the need for reform and experts completed the needed research. But by that point time had run out. A political change took place. Parliament was dissolved and the new government did not continue the reforms. The historic "five minutes" were not used when the implementation of change was possible.

In order to cement the stated preconditions, **a social mechanism is needed**. Decentralization processes emerge in all developed countries. It is an historical process that results from the development of a civil society that is conscious of its rights to participate in the governance process. The need for decentralization is clearly underscored in international documents. This general tendency creates an international climate of support for reforms. However, for the reforms to succeed, processes that take place internally are the most important. Reforms need strong national supporters. If they do not exist, there needs to be a mechanism that would foster their emergence.

When reforms begin, the majority of the local populations do not know what local self-government means. Only when local self-government begins to exist and achieve its first successes, do people notice the possibility of personal gain and other such advantages. These successes lead to the formation of new groups of local politicians and administrators who support the country's decentralization process. New local elites, who will play an increasingly important role, emerge. Their power and influence is intimately connected with local autonomy, and therefore with local self-government and its authorities. An entire institutional sector connected with local self-government, and interested in its success, develops. Support of decentralization emerges, which fosters the development of local self-government. The programs implementing the reforms should create conditions that most effectively support the changes taking place.

The Polish Experience

The development, in Poland, of an administrative apparatus that fostered the emergence of groups supporting the reforms was critical in solidifying decentralization. In 1990, the local government reform accelerated the formation of local political elites and provided them with opportunities to participate actively in public life. This created an environment that strongly supported the further development of local self-governance and encouraged the decentralization process in the country. Local self-government became a permanent fixture of the new system. It became a social and political force that was able to resist subsequent attempts to recentralize.

The creation of conditions conducive to the reform's development is dependent on several factors, which are only partially related to politicians undertaking this initiative. To a large extent they are the result of independent processes. They also depend on inherited conditions resulting from actions undertaken in the past by others. Reformers must have an ability to take into account what already exists and simultaneously add what is missing. Each reform requires sufficient time for its preparation and implementa-

tion. Success will depend not only on how individual actions have been organized and realized, but also on their execution when external conditions were favorable. Reforms can be undertaken only when history provides the so-called “five minutes of chance.”

It is important to point out that resistance to reforms does not end when the reforms are implemented. Those who lost, as a result of the reforms, attempt to return to the initial status or, at the very least, to limit their defeat. This is a dangerous moment as it limits the effects of the reforms and weakens its social standing. People lose trust as changes are half-completed and inconsequential. This weakens social support and in turn generates enthusiasm among the reform’s opponents. In order for it to be clear that there is no possibility of returning to previous arrangements, each step of the reform should be sufficiently radical.

A good metaphor to illustrate this situation is of a plane flying over the ocean. At some point the plane cannot return and must go forward. This is the so-called “point of no return.” Each stage of the reform must be constructed in such a way that the point of no return is crossed and everybody is aware that reforms bring permanent changes.

If a general impression exists that there will be no return to the previous arrangement, then opponents begin to look for places for themselves within the new system. By doing so, they solidify and implement the changes themselves.

6. Guidelines to Decentralization Programs

The development of local self-government requires the completion of many specific tasks. In the previous sections, we have outlined their overall character. Their analysis allows for the formulation of basic guidelines for their development. They are listed below. It is important to remember that the reform program should be directly connected to the conditions in a particular country, and therefore all recommendations should be treated only as suggestions.

1) Build an individual state system

The political and administrative system of each country is dependent on geographical, social, political, and economic factors, among others. If the regime is not compatible with these factors, tensions will emerge that will decrease the effectiveness of the state and its administration, forcing reforms and, in exceptional cases, leading to crises.

This means that every country must create their own individual system and other countries’ models should not be cloned. Models which worked elsewhere will not necessarily be successful under different circumstances. You must take advantage of other peoples’ experience but thoughtfully adapt it.

2) Think of reform as a step in a never-ending process.

The forces shaping the state's systems are in constant evolution. Consequently, there is a periodic need for adjustments and reforms of any given country's political and administrative structures. An optimal model of a state that never requires reform does not exist. To the contrary, each reform should be treated as a subsequent step, a temporary stage, that after a certain period will require altering again.

3) Plan the implementation carefully.

The plan must clearly define not only the reform's goals and the future model of the state's system but also how the necessary reforms should be conducted. It is critical to remember that the reform's effects are, to a large degree, dependent on the ways in which they are implemented. Even the best attempt can be foiled by poor organization of the implementation plan.

4) Use the historic "five minutes."

The system's reform is possible only when particular conditions allow for it to take place, when the historic "five minutes" exist. It is important to use this opportunity because such favorable circumstances may never happen again. If the circumstances do not allow for a full realization of the program, one should attempt to implement what is possible. It is important to remember that in the future conditions may not become better. They could become worst.

5) Be realistic and pragmatic.

The reform's plan must be realistic in its goals and tasks. It is a mistake to create programs that have unattainable goals. When too much is promised, people are often left feeling unsatisfied. The reform's final result is a reflection of the reformers' vision. It also reflects the impact of uncontrollable factors, which may change the original plan. The reform's outcome is the result of many compromises. The success of 100 percent of the objectives can rarely be achieved. It is important to remember that even if 70 percent of the initial plans are implemented, it is a success. If the reform were not undertaken, nothing would have been achieved.

6) Remember resistance to the reform.

The reforms' implementers will meet more opponents than supporters. From the beginning, opponents will loudly resist any reforms. Supporters emerge only when the reforms begin to bring about positive results. It is important to create an implementation "map" in order to identify potential opponents or

groups that will lose as a result of the reforms, and any conflicts that may emerge. Agendas should establish a method for the elimination of contradictions and give preference to compromise to those that will not alter the reform's overall goals.

7) Build social support for the reforms.

None of the reforms can be successful without social support. It is crucial to identify groups that will be interested in the reform's success. Conditions must be created that will allow for their active participation, support, and public voice. Over time, these conditions should allow for an increase in the number of participants and their power. Nongovernmental organizations can play a very positive role here.

8) Trust society.

The reform's opponents always argue that society is not ready for self-governance and that reforms have to be postponed until the people start asking for them. This is demagoguery. Society cannot ask for something that it does not know. Furthermore, you cannot learn self-governance from books but you can learn by doing it. One must trust that people will be able to meet the challenges. One must trust his or her own society.

However, administrative changes have to be coordinated with society's evolution. If they take place too slowly in comparison to social expectations, people feel frustrated by still existing limitations. If they move too fast, reforms do not bring the expected results because the people do not understand them and do not know how to benefit from them.

9) Cross the "point of no return."

The transformation of the state cannot be completed as a result of one reform. This is a process spanning many years and many steps. At each stage, the scope of the changes accomplished should be so expansive that everybody understands that the "point of no return" has been reached. Only through this process can opponents be neutralized. Simultaneously, however, the manner in which reforms are implemented should guarantee the continuity of the government's ability to fulfill its tasks. The administration's collapse will result in the discrediting of the reform and its rejection by society.

10) Harmonize actions in many spheres.

The crucial preconditions for the reform's successful implementation are: the leaders' political will, the experts' knowledge, the existence of social support,

and the existence of qualified human resources. An eagerness to create conducive conditions for the reform should serve as the fundamental principal of the implementation plan. This would mean that the implementation would require the completion of a diverse set of tasks: preparation of legal acts, institutional changes, shaping of public opinion, development of human resources, and conducting research and analysis among others. It will be necessary to work in many different spheres: policy, legislation, central and local administration, nongovernmental organizations, and professional and academic organizations. All these activities need to be coordinated together. This requires a central unit that would have at its disposal the necessary resources in order to be effectively responsible for the reform's implementation in all spheres of life.

11) Establish a strong coordinating unit.

It is wrong to think that self-government reforms are focused only on changes in administration and therefore can be dealt with by the Ministry of Public Administration. The functioning of local self-government encompasses all spheres of the state's tasks, thus the responsibilities of all central government institutions will be involved. The reform's program must include agreements with all units, as the reforms will change their scope of operation.

The Polish Experience

During the reforms in Poland, it was necessary to reach agreements with all the ministries and central offices. For example: agreements were made with the Ministry of Defense regarding the use of military land and buildings located in particular municipalities and about the role of local authorities in the recruitment of soldiers; agreements with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs focused on the mechanisms of overseeing cooperation and links of Polish border municipalities with neighboring countries.

A single ministry, like the Ministry of Public Administration, cannot be the only ministry to make such agreements. A coordinating and overseeing unit with decision-making power must work with ministries and be able to overcome administrative resistance, if necessary. The central administration is usually the major opponent of self-governance's development. It creates numerous obstacles to the reform's implementation, especially in areas where its power will be ultimately limited.

12) Identify the role of existing local authorities.

The rebuilding of local self-government radically changes laws and tasks under the jurisdiction of local government, and therefore deeply changes its organization and functioning. It is very beneficial for reforms when local authorities participate in the process of change and support it. This is not always possible. In many cases the existing administration does not want these changes to take place as they limit its freedom, for example, through the establishment of social accountability. In Poland, in 1990, the establishment of local self-government eliminated, to a large extent, officials appointed during communism. The local and regional administration at that time was the greatest opponent to the reform.

The implementation program should very carefully analyze the role that the existing local administration is supposed to play. Its representatives should either be deeply involved in the process of reforms or they should be distanced from it.

13) Remember the enormous scale of change taking place.

The local self-government reform requires changes in all administrative units across the country and involves most facets of public life. The scale of changes is monumental. It involves hundreds of new legislative directives, changes in employment for thousands of employees, education of hundreds of thousands of people, and reorganization of thousands of institutions. The scale of the reform is one of its greatest challenges and it requires appropriate organization and preparation.

PART TWO

Steps of the Reform

The Structure of the Process

Transformation of the state is a process consisting of many gradually realized reforms. Each reform requires several steps that vary greatly in character. Four basic stages are identified here:

Step I. **Conceptualization**

This step is initiated when the need for a reform is recognized within the political domain. Following this, political will is nurtured and a draft describing the future changes is created. This phase is complete when politicians begin to make decisions regarding the specificity of the reform, having previously prepared its general shape.

Step II. **Design and approval**

Making political decisions opens the door for the next step. Here a detailed model of the future administrative system of government is designed and, following that, the legislative process starts. This step is completed when the legal acts modifying the administrative system take effect.

Step III. **Implementation**

The implementation step is initiated when the legislative process is completed. This step consists of all the activities related to adjusting the administrative system to new legal regulations. It is completed when the adjustment is finished.

Step IV. **Consolidation**

The implementation of the reform is not the final step. It is critical to provide for monitoring and assessment of the reform's consequences, as well as to solve any arising problems and disputes, and to strengthen the changes that have taken effect. This step has no clear final stage. It may last for years and then it may slowly transform into the first step of the following phase of the transformation process.

The reforms must be performed simultaneously in several fields, each with many participants. They are listed below:

- A. Politics.** This field is comprised of politicians and political groups making decisions related to the administrative system and phases of the state's development. This sphere is very difficult to define, as the political scene is created differently in each state. Therefore, a variety of participants may be present here.
- B. Legislation.** Parliament and the highest state authorities, having constitutional influence on the legislative process, play a major role here. However, government institutions and even nongovernmental organizations may also take part in the legislative process.
- C. Central administration.** All central level state institutions actively participate in this field as they have a possibility to influence the institutional transformations.
- D. Local government.** This refers to local and regional governments that the reforms are primarily targeting.
- E. Nongovernmental and professional organizations.** These institutions from outside the public administration are actively organizing local communities, cooperating with self-government, and supporting local authorities in a number of ways.
- F. Research and study.** Research institutions are primarily active in delivering necessary knowledge to all the above-mentioned participants of the reform process and, thereby, participating in each aforementioned field.

Participants of the particular fields are obliged to complete various tasks of different importance in the consecutive stages that are described in Figure 1.

Figure 1.
The Tasks of the Actors in Decentralization Reform

Stage	Tasks assigned to actors acting in the spheres:					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
	Politics	Legislation	Central administration	Local government	Nongovernmental and professional organizations	Research and study
Conceptualization	X	—	o	o / —*	o	o
Design and Approval	X	X	X	X / —*	o	o
Implementation	x	o	X	X	X	o
Consolidation	x	—	X	X	X	o

Notes: X Key tasks
 x Supervision and coordination
 o Subsidiary tasks
 — No tasks

* The role and tasks of the local authorities in power at the start of the reform may be different depending on the character of reform: establishing new administrative system or amending the existing local-government. (See Part One, Section 6.)

The next part of this guidebook describes all the stages, each with their own necessary steps and tasks, and the participants needed to realize the reform.

Step I.

Conceptualization

Start: The need for a reform is recognized.

End: Political decisions concerning the reform's implementation are made.

Duration: A few years, depending on political circumstances.

Main tasks: Fostering political will to introduce changes in the state's administrative system; outlining the reform concept; establishing a political center, which will support and coordinate the reforms.

Primary Participants: Politicians.

A. Politics

Task: Fostering political will to undertake the reform

This stage shall consist of discussions and deliberations on the need to initiate the reform as well as on the reform concept itself. More organized activities will appear later, in the following steps, when the political decision will have already been made. Hence, all the opinions or remarks presented here cannot be considered recommendations, as they only describe the process. However, in every single case this process will be shaped differently.

Fostering political will to undertake changes signifies consent by the governing group leaders. All efforts have to be directed at the adequate formulation of political programs and the creation of favorable opinions *inside the governing group*. Political will should be expressed formally, which would allow for the next step to begin within the framework of the state structure. There is no clear definition of how the political will should be expressed.

The Polish Experience

In 1989, this preliminary step was completed when the Polish Senate decided to submit a legislative initiative concerning the process of rebuilding local self-government. The legislative work had been initiated in Parliament and the government. Previously, all discussions and preparatory works had occurred only within the groups of the democratic opposition. In 1998, a formal expression of political will was made by the prime minister in the form of a declaration, announced in agreement with the political leadership of the parliamentary majority.

It is difficult to assess the progress made during this stage, as it depends on many political circumstances occurring throughout the country. It is these circumstances that form the specific conditions in which the reform concept “grows” and develops. This stage may last many years.

The Polish Experience

This stage lasted nearly ten years in Poland, starting with the debates on state reform in 1980–81 until the Senate’s resolution on the legislative initiative in July 1989. It was closely connected with the period of political transformations taking place throughout Central Europe. The main reason why this stage took so long was the enactment of martial law by the failing communist regime.

1) Political Will

Reform is not possible without the expressed political will of the governing organization. The development of political will depends on many factors, specific to the particular country and period of time. The most frequent arguments for and against the reform that influence the attitudes of politicians are as follows:

- **For:**
 - The poor position of the state and its troubled economy requires immediate changes.
 - The need for transformation of the country calls for a strategic political program.
 - A positive assessment by society of the changes’ outcome is expected.

- **Against:**
 - The anticipated resistance and possible conflicts will make the reform impossible.
 - The costs of the reforms' implementation are too high.
 - The scale of the risk of defeat is too great.

Usually reforms are initiated only when the existing system is functioning so ineffectively that an effort has to be made to eliminate its defects. But reforms cannot be directed only at repairing the system. Reforms indicate the trends of society's development. These trends must fulfill society's future needs. The assessment of society's needs, what will be beneficial for the state and its citizens, always has a subjective character. It depends, to a great extent, on the opinions of politicians and their parties' political programs. Conformity of the reform's goals with the vision for the new state always has to be the main objective.

Another crucial factor is the anticipated assessment of the reform's results by citizens and its influence on gaining social support. The government must take all efforts to ensure that citizens are satisfied with the reform's results because their satisfaction will transform into support for its candidates during the next elections.

Introducing changes will not immediately generate the expected improvements. The simple modification of legal provisions does not automatically result in a better functioning state. Everybody must learn the newly-established rules, get to know them in detail, and then adjust its own actions thereto. The positive aspects of the changes adopted will be experienced by society only after some time and only then can politicians expect increased support. During the initial phase, people will be generally dissatisfied, as they will be forced to give up their own habits and modify existing customs. This means that politicians usually schedule the reform so that society has a chance to experience the positive results of the changes before the next scheduled elections. Successful elections will inevitably contribute to society's increased support in furthering the reforms.

The analysis of anticipated resistance and conflicts is an important factor. Potential opponents of the reforms always form a block of stubborn political power and this should be taken into consideration. And finally, it is necessary to assess the costs, problems, and the risk. It cannot be guaranteed that the reforms undertaken will meet all expectations.

Political will can be created when the above analyses demonstrate more advantages than drawbacks.

2) Reform Initiators

In order to initiate any kind of reform, a discussion needs to be initiated and the others have to be persuaded that a reform is necessary. This is a political matter and only politicians may undertake such an initiative.

In a stable government the need to introduce local self-government reforms is signaled primarily by local governments. But for those countries making the transition to democratic rule from totalitarian regimes, it is generally impossible since self-government is non-existent or exists in a very limited form. Local administrations will be apprehensive about any type of changes; moreover, they have no knowledge as to what changes are possible. Therefore, the local government cannot be expected to initiate the administrative system reform. It has to be assumed in advance that the first step in the process of building local self-government needs to be made authoritatively and often against the will of the existing local administration.

The Polish Experience

Such strong resistance occurred in Poland in 1990, when the local administration was still deeply rooted in the communist regime. The reform initiative was taken up by the new political leaders, despite the resistance from members of the old administration aware that would lose their influence and positions.

The central administration is also uninterested in adopting revolutionary changes and decentralizing. Hence, this administration cannot be expected to propose any initiatives. This task has to be undertaken by politicians.

The Polish Experience

In the majority of countries, reforms are initiated gradually. First, local governments are rendered independent—to a limited extent—by organizing free local elections. Various political groups present this initiative. The scope of these initiatives is generally narrow. Only after gaining more experience, local self-governments begin to increase their sphere of power, which furthers the process of decentralization. At each step, the resistance of various groups interested in maintaining the status quo has to be overcome. These processes progress rather slowly and, usually, are only partially effective.

In this regard, Poland was a unique example. When the possibility of reform arose, there already existed a reform program as a result of many years of prior research. In addition, there was a group of people prepared to start the implementation process. The opposition had presented local government reform initiatives much earlier.

The educational background of the reform initiators is of great importance and significantly influences the reform process. When a strong local self-government does not yet exist, this group must be created outside the local self-government structures and should become the reform management center.

The Polish Experience

Such a group was already established in Poland during the communist regime, within an academic environment. When the previous administrative system collapsed, and certain reforms became possible, this group gained strong support and received assistance from political leaders. Its members were invited to take important positions within the government and Parliament.

3) The Reform's Goals and Concepts

This step of conceptualization is devoted to creating a first draft of the new model of the state administrative system we want to create. This model should be prepared following a series of political discussions and various analyses, including the following tasks:

- i) **An analysis of the status quo**, in order to identify the system defects, which need to be eliminated. This way, the first set of goals to be achieved will be established.
- ii) **Identifying potential processes** that may have an influence on various spheres affected by the reform. For example: what kind of influence will the economic development have on the expanding tasks of local self-governments? This will help to specify the reform's goals in more detail.
- iii) **Creating a draft of a future model** of the administrative system that is to be established. This stage of activities will focus only on a very preliminary draft of the system. The details will be clarified during the following steps of the reform's implementation process.

The identified reform goals and the model of the future state administrative system should form the basis for making political decisions about the reform initiation and inform the premise of further activities.

B. Participants of the Remaining Spheres

Participants of the remaining spheres may only play a supporting role to the politicians. Researchers can provide information and arguments, underline experiences of other countries, and draft necessary programs. The representatives of nongovernmental organizations may put pressure on politicians and create a positive social climate. Administration employees may also play a positive role by transferring their experiences and offering their own skills and expertise. But, with regard to this step, their activities may only have a subsidiary character, aimed at providing support to politicians by offering them strategic advice, specialized knowledge, and assistance.

Step II.

Design and Approval

Start: Making a political decision about the reform initiation.

End: Adopting all the acts necessary to implement the planned changes into the legislative system of the country.

Duration: One to two years.

Main tasks: Designing a new system, undertaking the legislative process, preparing for the reform's implementation.

Primary Participants: Politicians, legislators, central administration institutions, and depending on the reform profile, local governments.

A. Politics

When the previous step is completed, it means that a governing group had been convinced of the need for reform. The main objectives of the legislative work have been also adopted. Now these objectives need to be specified in more detail and issues causing concern and disputes need to be solved. Also, political decisions have to be made at this stage. Politicians are faced with new types of tasks, focusing on two primary problems:

- 1) Placing the intended reform within a long-term, strategic program for the state's transformation process.
- 2) Politically supporting the legislative process and building social support around the above issues.

1) Strategic Program for the State's Transformation Process

The process of transformation cannot be accomplished with a single reform. This should be a process consisting of many different stages and the reform should constitute its integral component. A general program related to the transformation process needs

to be formulated at this point. It is necessary, regardless of any serious hidden risks. Introducing the changes within a longer period of time runs the risk of inconsistency in the implementation process as a result of an ever-evolving list of participants. No guarantee can be given that the preliminary objectives can be implemented consistently. However, this type of risk cannot be eliminated.

The Polish Experience

Constant changes at the government level proved to be the major obstacle to the reforms in Poland. With the collapse of the first non-communist government in 1990, the consolidation of municipality reform was suspended. Then, for the second time, political changes blocked the 1993 reforms, when the leftist parties came into power after the early elections and the decentralization process was stopped once again.

When planning the timing and staging of the transformation process, a few requirements need to be taken into consideration:

- The public administration must operate in a continuous and effective way.
- The scope of changes must be adjusted to the level of knowledge and to society's awareness level.
- Each step of the reform must be sufficiently radical as to prevent regression to the original state.

The public administration must operate in a continuous manner and any disturbances resulting from the changes have to be minimized. These disturbances should not be too problematic for citizens, as the reform may then be discredited. Hence, undertaking changes simultaneously at various levels is not possible. At each stage of the reform's implementation, certain elements of the system should remain the same, in order to maintain stability of the system. The system's transformation should be designed in such a way as to allow the newly introduced elements to harmonize with those temporarily left unchanged, until all the remaining elements have been modified.

Yet, imperfect or only partial solutions should not be avoided because quick fixes have a tendency to entrench themselves and will create obstacles in the future. If a particular change cannot be adopted within a specified period of time, its fulfillment could be postponed until later, when the adequate conditions are present. Caution and timing are key to designing and implementing reform if the strategic goals are to be reached.

The Polish Experience

During the first stage of the reform in Poland, only self-government at the local level was established, although introducing it to higher levels of the administrative system had been the original goal. Simultaneously undertaking reforms at all levels of public administration would have proved chaotic and would have endangered the state's stability. For this reason, establishing self-government was limited to the municipality level.

Previously, proposals by the communist authorities to introduce a partial self-government at the regional level had been rejected by the opposition because this false compromise would have made it much more difficult to establish a strong self-government in the future.

Legal changes should be harmonized with society's development, its level of awareness, and its capacity to cooperate within the local communities. Understanding the reasons for establishing local self-government is necessary to accepting the changes and acquiring social support for the reforms. The transformation's process changes not only the administrative system and its institutions, but also the development of society's awareness and competence. That which is incomprehensible for people at first becomes obvious after some time.

A common argument used by reform opponents is that society has to "mature," and only then the process of introducing changes will be possible and successful. Accepting such an argument would hinder any type of reform from being undertaken. This would mean that people, without gaining the necessary experiences, would be able to acquire such a level of political knowledge and expertise as to specify by themselves what kind of changes they are in need of. This is rather unrealistic. Society cannot learn without gaining practical experiences. Democracy cannot be learned from books. However, when changes are introduced properly and the reasoning behind the changes is understood, society can adjust and learn from the new opportunities very quickly.

Wherever reforms are undertaken, people call for stopping any deeper reorganization of the system and halting the "destruction of the state." These exhortations offend with their mentoring tone that, convinced of its statements' infallibility, has an extreme lack of trust for the rest of society, which, by definition, is unable to execute its own autonomous decisions or actions. I have recently encountered a similar irrational argument in a post-communist state. One of its government members expressed his objections towards the need for decentralization by stating that society was not demanding it. How can society demand something they have never heard of and when people do not know what decentralization really means?

The changes aimed at the administrative system always have to remain ahead of society's actual level of knowledge and awareness, in order to indicate future development trends. However, introducing the changes too rapidly may lead to a lack of understanding of its core meaning and may result in society's rejection of them.

Each step of the reform must be sufficiently radical. Conservative powers will try to limit the scope of changes, even after their adoption. This is why each reform should be sufficiently drastic so as to prevent a return to the original state. This means that, although the system's transformation will be spread out over time, it cannot be based on small steps. The changes must be visible and substantial. There should be a period of stabilization after the adoption of each and every change, during which people shall have an opportunity to understand the real meaning of those changes and shall be able to adjust to their new circumstances. A period of time has to be given to absorb the reform. The reform's implementation process should resemble a set of stairs and not a ramp. Frequently, resistance to the reform is so strong that this "ramp" falls to the ground.

An important element distinguishing the new system from the old is the procedure of giving new names to the new functions and institutions. People have to see that something new is being created. If a name remains the same, they often do not notice that the system has been changed and consider the positions within the reformed institutions unchanged. The above issues are of great importance to guarantee proper social transmission.

The Polish Experience

It was a mistake, however, that the regional managers of the state administration took the traditional name "voivod." The title "voivod" is traditionally connected with the leadership over a population residing in a given territory. From society's perspective, this caused confusion as to what role the "voivod" would be playing. Still many people believe that the voivod represents the region, which is not true.

2) Political Support, the Legislative Process, and Building Social Support

Political support is essential to the implementation of any reform, despite the fact that the Parliament and central administrative institutions actually realize the given reform. A plan for all the proposed political activities is critical since risk is always associated with reform. Unexpected problems can, and usually do, occur and they will influence

the final shape of the undertaken changes to a greater or lesser degree. One can never be sure what changes will be actually implemented. Throughout the implementation process, strong resistance and conflicts will arise. Every effort should be made to minimize the negative consequences thereof. The program should be flexible and modified when problems are revealed. However, in order to not distort the reform, potential opponents have to be identified relatively soon in the process.

Identification of the reform's opponents and supporters is but one of the first onerous but necessary tasks. But it is difficult to accomplish the reforms when you cannot foresee who will be attacking the reforms and when. It is imperative to recognize the interests of different interest groups and to anticipate potential conflicts. (See Part One, Section 4.)

Every conflict has its own unique character. In certain cases the parties may be easily identified, and their interests are clear and obvious. In other cases the parties do not want to reveal their identity and intend to hide their real purposes. Therefore, sometimes it is difficult to foresee who will be affected by the proposed change and who will benefit from it; who will support the reforms; and who will be potential opponents. Identification of the actual interests has significant meaning because a compromise cannot be reached otherwise.

Based on the above analysis, a "road map" has to be prepared, describing the methods of cooperation with various groups, which will lead to the reform's implementation. This road map should separate two fundamental sets of activities:

- Gaining support of the legislative process in parliament
- Gaining society's support

• **Political Support to the Legislative Process**

In order to implement the acts modifying the state administration into daily life, political support must be summoned through other political powers. It requires establishing a dialogue with various political powers and social groups. While in the previous step these were internal discussions, now is the time for activities to be performed *outside the governing group*. The methods of realizing those tasks vary but dialogue and potential compromises are of great importance because the reform should gain as much support as possible and should be based on an agreement that reaches across party lines.

It may happen that the governing party has a sufficient majority in Parliament and enjoys sufficient political authority to implement the reforms in spite of the opposition. But this route has many hidden dangers. The opposition can always find ways to stop or distort the concept of the reforms during their implementation. It may also influence the formation of local resistance to change. It may pose a real risk, due to the fact that the changes are introduced on such a grand scale, encompassing the entire country and many spheres of

life. The reform organizers cannot supervise the reform's implementation in all places at all times. They always have to rely on the understanding, loyalty, and goodwill of others. Political objections may generate much broader resistance, which would make achieving positive results much more difficult.

- **Building Social Support**

It is impossible to achieve the reform's goals without society's support. Even if any initial social resistance was overcome and the changes implemented, society will remain unsatisfied if its attitude towards the reform is negative.

By encouraging society to support the reform, the state is, in effect, in debt to society. Promises are made that living standards will improve and it is expected that people will believe the promises and engage themselves in modifying the state's functioning. It is expected that society will be interested in the reform's success and will act as a partner during their implementation. This type of support cannot be gained automatically.

In general, society does not think in terms of a "common good" and general social values. People will assess the reform based on what they themselves have gained. Yet the administrative system's reforms will not result in any profits in the short-term period and people do not usually see a link between the effectiveness of the state and their own living standards. This link has to be explained to them and the reformers must devote their time and efforts to that cause. Moreover, people have to be treated as trustworthy partners. This is a condition for success. The inappropriate treatment of society will ruin all hope for achieving lasting change.

The tasks of explaining the reform's goals to society and of persuading it to support the reforms should not be the direct responsibility of politicians only. Their explanations are not always welcomed by society and, furthermore, they often lack the skills to do it well. Social partners can present the real meaning of decentralization and the need for the development of local self-government better than politicians. Thus the politicians have primarily to identify their social partners and to create conditions so their social partners can improve their skills and effectively be engaged into the process of building social support.

The Polish Experience

A positive example of establishing social partners and initiating cooperation in Poland was the creation of the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy. Parliament members created this nongovernmental organization in 1989. It became the primary partner of the government and Parliament during the reform's implementation period.

B. Legislation

The basic tasks in this sphere include designing a new system based on self-government and establishing the rules and procedures to implement it.

Reforms to the administrative system shape the specific requirements needed for the organization and the scope of legislative works. These requirements should be taken into consideration, in connection with the procedures that are binding in the particular country. We shall limit our discussion here by looking only at few of them.

1) Preparation of Drafts of Legal Acts

Usually government departments prepare the drafts of legal acts and the government submits them to Parliament for further reworking and their final adoption. In some countries, members of Parliament can also initiate the adoption of new legal acts. In this case, a certain faction or parliamentary commission is responsible for drafting these acts. Both legislative routes, governmental and parliamentary, have their own advantages and disadvantages. The governmental process requires special consultations to be held with all ministries, which usually do not support the upcoming changes, and their negative attitude may distort the reform. Likewise, the parliamentary process limits the access to specialized administrative services and data in their possession. Thus, the best solution is to divide the tasks, or at least establish a close cooperation between the government and parliament.

The Polish Experience

The working model, as described above, was adopted in Poland. While initiating both reforms, the governmental offices responsible for the implementation of the reforms were established and the division of tasks between the government and Parliament were agreed upon. In 1989, the legislative initiative was presented by the Senate, in which the majority of its members belonged to the former democratic opposition. The Senate commissions drafted and submitted a wide range of acts for adoption. These included constitutional amendments, and acts on local self-government, on local state administration, on self-government employees, and the electoral law, whereas the governmental office drafted all the acts related to the reform's implementation process and the amendments to a few dozen legal acts concerning the division of tasks and responsibilities. The only exception was made by the Ministry of Finance, which prepared the acts connected with local finances. This exception proved to cause many problems because the ministry was too conservative and did not undertake the decentralization of finances to the same degree as the decentralization of tasks. However, only the Ministry of Finance was able to provide a team of experts and all the necessary statistical data.

In 1999, the drafts of general legal acts were submitted by MPs, which avoided the need to hold consultations with specific ministries that could have perverted the reform objectives. But the government plenipotentiary drafted the amendments to the specific legal acts.

2) The Scope of Legislative Change

Local self-government reform makes it necessary to adopt not only legal acts related to the administrative system, but also amendments to many legal acts concerning various areas of daily life, for example, acts pertaining to the educational system, healthcare, land development, public roads, environmental protection, the conscription of army recruits, or permission to hold street demonstrations. Following the process of drafting and adopting the relevant laws for the administrative system, a significant number of changes in other applicable laws must be made that modify the competences of many institutions. Within the framework of the local self-government reform in Poland, 94 legal acts were amended in 1989 and 146 acts again in 1998.

In order to adopt these amendments, it is necessary to conduct a detailed analysis of the legislation currently in force to identify a list of essential changes, and then to make arrangements as to the organization of the process. The above analysis requires a lot of work and is time-consuming. The failure to undertake adequate changes will lead

to inconsistencies in the binding laws and to contradictory provisions. It will result in difficulties in the state management and various unnecessary disputes, but it also may undermine the public's trust in the reform itself and its authors.

3) The Schedule of Legislative Works

It is extremely important to set up an appropriate schedule covering all the particulars of the legislative process. The process itself includes many legal acts, so it requires a much longer time to be completed. Nevertheless, all of the acts should enter into force at the same time, so as to avoid inconsistencies in the binding provisions of the law. This requires an adequate organization of the legislative process.

The Polish Experience

In 1990, legal acts were gradually adopted in Poland during a period of few months. First, fundamental legal acts describing the future administrative system were adopted. Then amendments to a few dozen existing legal acts were adopted, modifying the division of tasks and competences of various state institutions, in this way fulfilling the objectives of the general legal acts. In all of these acts, no date of entry into force was specified, referring instead to a separate act. The date was indicated in the last legal act of the series, which at the same time described the system's implementation method, meaning the organization of transforming the administration and the working methods used during a transition period. The new system took effect on the day of the first free local elections in Poland.

4) Guarantee the Continuity of Services

The public administration has to be able to perform its operations ceaselessly in order to guarantee the continuity of services to residents and public affairs management. The reform causes the reorganization of many institutions, whose scope of competences is modified as tasks are transferred to other institutions. A new administrative system cannot be established straight away. It is unavoidable to have a transition period, during which this reorganization takes place. This is a period with many difficulties and administrative turbulences. Therefore, it is vital to design in detail the process of undertaking these changes and this requires an adoption of a number of legal regulations.

The Polish Experience

On January 1, 1999, local self-government at the district and regional levels was introduced in Poland. The elections, however, of the new authorities had already been held in September of 1998, in order to allow new councils to carry out the necessary preparatory work, although they did not possess any power yet.

The system should be based on a rule that the existing institutions continue to perform all of their tasks until the new ones are capable of accepting their new obligations. In many areas such a takeover will only be possible with a significant delay in relation to the entry date of the new system.

The Polish Experience

The process of transferring competences and tasks in Poland generally lasted a month or two. However, the transfer of state property to local self-governments took much longer. In the majority of cases, the legal formalities related to real estate lasted from one to two years. But, in certain cases, the legal disputes lasted for over ten years.

5) Organize the Transfer of Assets and Control over Subordinated Institutions and Companies.

The reform will include the transfer to local self-government of many public institutions (i.e., schools), service delivery units (i.e., water supply services), companies (i.e., road maintenance or parks management), real estate, financial assets, etc. It is a broad topic that encompasses many tasks, for which clear legal procedures of transfer are crucial. These procedures must **take into consideration the nature of the task and the conditions** under which it will be performed:

- i) Transfers shall include a great number of operations, anywhere from several hundred to several thousand institutions or several thousand to several million properties. These types of transfers are usually dispersed throughout the country and take place in all cities.
- ii) The concrete conditions of a particular operation may be different and inconsistent with its objectives, which were adopted while drawing up procedures.

- iii) Transfers should be undertaken as soon as possible. The transition period may cause serious disturbances in the administration's functioning.
- iv) Transfers will cause numerous disputes between various institutions, the scope and character of which will be difficult to predict.

Notably, problems with leasehold enfranchisement prevented many post-communist countries from implementing a redistribution of state property. The majority of these countries still have not undertaken such a reform. The opponents to decentralization highlighted these problems, while raising many other issues concerning the reform. Western experts often confirm what the opponents claim and believe that communalization is impossible without first completing a series of preparatory works.

An example of what can go wrong: an expert was hired by a central government in South Eastern Europe to prepare a report on the communalization of property. The expert suggested that it would be necessary to first prepare a register of all the properties in the country, then to establish a special commission that would assign all the properties to the appropriate entities, and finally to hold local referendums that would enable the residents to express whether they wanted to accept the proposed division. Certainly, such a program was unrealistic, and its adoption would block any changes in the future. The expert's proposed solution was not followed.

A fundamental condition to secure local self-governments' actual autonomy is the transfer of state property. Therefore it cannot be delayed in any way and the **procedure should be based on the following rules:**

- a) The types of properties to be subject to transfer should be specified in a legal act, preferably in general terms in order to create a margin of interpretation in relation to unpredictable local conditions. To the greatest extent possible, the system of managing state properties shall constitute a reference point, and properties currently under the management of a specific administrative level shall be transferred to local self-governments, with a clear indication of exemptions.
- b) The transfer of property shall be made in a decentralized way, based on the agreements between local authorities and representatives of state administration in a specific region.
- c) An effective system of solving disputes that may arise and promptly making final decisions has to be established.
- d) Transfer of property shall take place under the law on a specific day. Specifying details or solving disputes may still be done after that date. However, it would be risky to undertake individual decisions separately regarding each property or institution, because, considering the number of properties and institutions to be transferred, those transfers may last many years or even a few dozen years.

The Polish Experience

The municipality enfranchisement in Poland was considered the main condition that would guarantee the autonomy of municipalities and it was carried out together with the introduction of the local self-government system in 1990. Municipalities took over properties by virtue of law on the day the local self-government system took effect. The entire operation was enacted using a decentralized method, based on a few simple rules, specified in the law. The rules included the following:

- As the point of departure, the assumption was made that municipalities should become the owners of all state property, which was under the management of the then local state administration, except for objects used for general public purposes.
- Municipalities were drawing up lists of properties and enterprises that they wanted to take over and submitted those lists to the leaders of the regional state administration. Based on their consent, it was possible to take over the property and make relevant entries in the notary books. If consent was refused, a municipality could submit its own motions to the Enfranchisement Commission, established by the prime minister and, depending on its decision, the parties might file a notice of appeal to the court.
- Municipalities also had the right to submit their motions for the transfer of state property, which was not under the management of the then local authorities but was essential to realize their tasks.

Everything was much easier in 1998. The property was transferred, together with the organizational units that were responsible for property management.

The process of enfranchisement has to respect various acquired rights of particular villages or residents' groups. Some of these rights could be rooted in the distant past and be difficult to prove. Observing those privileges seems to be essential in maintaining traditions and creating a feeling of community within the local area.

The Polish Experience

One of those privileges that needed to be considered when undertaking the state reforms was the privilege to pasture cattle on pastures that are located in the very center of Krakow. This privilege was granted 500 years ago to the inhabitants of a village that is no longer in existence, but people living within the area still benefit from this privilege.

6) Establish Proper Regulations Concerning Self-government Employees

The success of the reform will depend to a great extent on the qualifications of the employees of the future administration. The new system should be able to offer attractive working positions in the administration for persons with the highest qualifications. Even the best-designed legal system will not pass the test if there are no people willing to work within the system. There are a number of elements that make work in the administration attractive, including salaries, employment stability, or career and development opportunities. The system should create incentives for better work performance, opportunities to upgrade the qualifications of public officials, and the development of a more professional administration. These issues should be solved during the legislative stage to guarantee that, while a new system is being implemented, the administration employees are familiar with their conditions of work, and moreover, that these conditions meet their expectations.

The Polish Experience

This issue was ignored and remained unsolved during the local self-government reforms in Poland. The administrative personnel were not adequately prepared, personal career opportunities were not clearly described, and no mechanisms were established to upgrade one's qualifications. Currently, it is observed that there is a high level of personnel fluctuation, a strong influence of political forces on administration, and the process of creating a professional administrative cadre is progressing much too slowly.

C. Central Administration

The main tasks assigned to the central administration in this stage include the following:

- 1) To create a steering unit responsible for the reform's implementation.
- 2) To undertake all the preparatory works aimed at the changes that will be adopted after the legislative process is completed.
- 3) To participate in the process of designing a new system and to draft legal acts, as agreed with parliament, and to submit the drafts to parliament.

The organization of the implementation process shall depend on the scope of the reform. Generally, **three types of reforms** may be distinguished, depending on *what* is subject to change:

- **The change affects the scope of tasks and responsibilities of the existing local self-government authorities.**

The reform concerns the process of development of self-governance when local self-government is already in place. It is necessary to undertake organizational changes of local authorities to introduce new procedures or take over new institutions or property.

- **The change affects the constitutional nature of local authorities and the scope of their tasks and responsibilities.**

The reform concerns the change of the existing administration units' character. In place of the current state administration, local self-government authorities are introduced. It is therefore necessary to hold elections and set up institutions, to be followed by the transformation of the administration, introducing new procedures, taking over property, organizing the economy, etc.

- **The change affects the administrative division of the state and restructuring the nature and scope of the local authorities' tasks and responsibilities.**

In addition to the instances stated above, it is necessary to liquidate a certain number of existing authorities and set up a number of new ones according to the new subdivisions of the country.

These three types of reforms only serve as examples, because in particular cases other types of reforms may appear. For example, a reform may concern only the changes of the administrative division, without modifying the scope of competences of local authorities. Furthermore, so-called "in-between" situations may also occur, for example, local self-government exists under the law, but in practice its competences are very limited; it only undertakes these activities that are similar to those performed by state administration. Nevertheless, liquidation of the institutions currently in power is not to be expected, only the scope of their competencies will be extended.

1) Steering Unit

The type of reform to be implemented shall play a fundamental role in determining the organization of units responsible for accomplishing the reform.

Public administration will have to fulfill an important and difficult task during the next stage of the program. Upon completion of the legislative process, its results will have to be put into effect by the state administrative system. Therefore everything has to be well organized and prepared in detail. It is essential to establish a steering unit within the government. This unit shall be responsible for drafting, in consultation with parliament, all the relevant legal acts, and afterwards, implementing the entire system. Designing the organizational scheme of this unit, as well as determining its political and administrative position, shall be of great importance, as it may have an impact on many aspects of the reform process. The steering unit should be provided with:

- political support to effectively overcome inevitable resistance in the central administration, and
- specific authority to encroach upon the competencies of all the ministries within the framework of the reform.

The management of this unit should enjoy the government's confidence during the reform implementation process because it will definitely face repeated accusations raised by reform opponents. People employed in the ministries are usually considered the major opponents to decentralization. Meanwhile, the reforms aimed at decentralization and the development of local self-governance cover particular areas that lie within the competencies of various ministries. It is, therefore, impossible to charge only one ministry dealing with internal affairs or administration with the responsibility to implement the reform.

A question arises: where should the steering unit be located within government structure? Here, different institutional solutions seem to be possible, depending primarily on the meaning given to the reform being introduced. The following may be put in charge of the unit:

- Vice prime minister, supervising several ministries
- Minister without portfolio, appointed to implement the reform
- Specially appointed office, equipped with adequate authority to encroach on various matters that all ministries deal with

The Polish Experience

A specially appointed office was established in Poland, where a government plenipotentiary with broad competencies was appointed by the Council of Ministers. The plenipotentiary was directly subordinate to the prime minister and enjoyed his confidence and political support.

At the very beginning of 1989, the plenipotentiary had a small office consisting of eight people. In time, the number of employees increased to twenty. During the implementation period, each ministry appointed one undersecretary to deal with reform issues.

In 1998, a similar organizational model was adopted. The plenipotentiary office was slightly larger because of its broader scope of responsibilities, concerning mainly legislative work. All of the issues related to the reform's implementation, from then on, were handed over to a specially appointed vice minister in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration. He was duly authorized to monitor the implementation and supervised a team of representatives of all the interested ministries.

The reform's implementation shall not be limited only to the activities undertaken at the central level. Institutional transformations and modifications of ownership relations must be carried out throughout the entire territory of the state. The above actions will be performed by thousands of people, in various places in the country, all at the same time. Therefore, they need to be adequately supported, and the central level authorities cannot provide such support. To fulfill the task, a network of subsidiary units covering the whole country must be established. These units should directly support particular authorities and, at the same time, harmonize the adopted changes. Furthermore, it has to be guaranteed that all the implementation work is carried out consistently throughout the state and there are no differences in the new rules' interpretation.

Assisting the changes is crucial because it tends to be difficult to gain loyal support from the existing administration. The subsidiary network of the central steering unit should be established early and be well prepared to perform its tasks during the implementation period.

The Polish Experience

In 1989, the representative offices of the government plenipotentiary in Poland consisted of three to five people and were established in each of forty-nine regions then in existence. The representatives were charged with the task of preparing the necessary works in order to initiate the activities of local self-governments. Afterwards, they were responsible for supporting them, particularly in regard to communication with regional administration, which then included people from the previous regime.

Those representatives fulfilled their role and significantly contributed to the success of the reform. Their main task during this stage was to establish contacts with non-governmental organizations and to participate in creating a climate of social support.

In 1998, managers of the regional state administration undertook the reform implementation. No other option was possible at that time and it unfortunately proved not to be the best choice.

2) Preparatory Works

The nature of preparatory tasks will depend on the type of reform, as well as on the existing institutions, which may be useful within the implementation process. The following list of tasks may serve as a guide:

- Perform a cost-assessment of the reform's implementation process and the provision of necessary financial means.
- Organize cooperation with the associations of local authorities or particular municipalities to acquire their assistance when collecting comments and proposals and to organize pilot studies, if necessary.
- Draw up the implementation plan, and above all else a division of works for the whole country.
- Establish cooperation with nongovernmental, professional, and research organizations, analyze their capacity to participate in the reform's implementation, select partners among the above organizations to foster a closer cooperation, and specify all conditions that shall apply while fulfilling specific tasks.
- Establish contacts with organizations from other countries that are willing to provide assistance and conclude a framework agreement concerning this assistance and its organization, as well as initiate study abroad programs
- Organize a system of education for local personnel.

The list will grow when the reform also covers the changes made in the administrative division of the state. In that case, the steering unit will bear the responsibility for an effective liquidation of offices and organizing new ones. The unit must be adequately prepared to undertake this task.

Another task is the proper training of people who will be working within the subsidiary network of the steering unit. It is especially important, as the effective implementation of changes and overcoming potential difficulties will depend greatly on the skills the employees have acquired. During the next step of the reform's implementation they will be responsible for supervising the work of hundreds or thousands of local politicians and officials, who will then be making specific decisions related to the administration system under construction. The legal acts shall only specify the general rules of local self-government organization and shape the general framework of functioning of the administrative units. Within those frameworks local people will decide on who will be employed, which properties will be transferred to whom, how particular offices will be organized, and how these offices will operate. They have to be prepared to make those decisions carefully.

The list of potential issues and tasks is long. It may include, for example:

- holding elections of new authorities and establishing new institutions,
- readjusting offices to perform their new duties,
- preparing a new cadre of employees,
- creating social support for reforms,
- undertaking the transfer of real estate,
- adequately transforming enterprises that are subject to takeover,
- taking over public service delivery, and
- developing their own financial revenues.

In order to undertake all these changes, it is necessary to establish an appropriate organizational and decision-making apparatus in all towns in the country. Its effective functioning will be crucial for the reform; achievement of the intended goal or defeat of the reform will greatly depend on this organizational structure. The final success will depend on the work performed by thousands of people. Therefore, all the relevant organizational decisions need to be made much earlier.

3) Participation in Designing a New System

Participation in designing a new system has been described in the chapter related to the legislative process.

D. Local Governments

The reform always results in significant changes to the general situation, tasks, and nature of local authorities. These authorities constitute the main objects of transformation, whereas other institutions should only provide their assistance whenever necessary. The scope of their responsibilities shall depend on the type of reform to be undertaken (see Part Two, Step II., C.).

With regard to the change to the scope of tasks and responsibilities of the existing local self-government authorities (Point A), when local self-government authorities are already in place and the reform is to expand the scope of tasks and responsibilities of the existing authorities, then in principle the local authorities could introduce the changes related to their operation using their own resources. The existing self-government, with all its experience and willingness to constant development, shall be an invaluable partner that will require only some guidance to go through the process of adopting the reform.

With regard to the change to the constitutional nature of local authorities and the scope of their tasks and responsibilities (Point B), local state administration is liquidated and local self-government is created in the place of the old organizational scheme. The former administration is likely to oppose the reforms and will definitely be unwilling to cooperate. Thus, it needs to undergo changes. Cooperation with local authorities may be fostered only during the next step of the reform, when new authorities have finally come into existence. They will require plenty of support, as they will primarily be responsible for implementing the reform.

With regard to the change to the administrative division of the state and restructuring the nature and scope of the local authorities' tasks and responsibilities (Point C), taken together with local self-government reform, a change in the administrative division of the state is being undertaken. It has to be carried out by the central administration, and only upon the establishment of the new authorities will it then be able to deal with the organization of the new administrative units.

The Polish Experience

Such a differentiation took place in Poland. During the first stage, the existing units of state administration were transformed into local self-government units, by expanding their independence, modifying their working methods, and their scope of responsibilities, whereas the second stage included a significant change related to the administrative division of the state, resulting in the liquidation of many existing units and establishing others instead.

In 1989, the majority of local administrations from the previous regime opposed the reforms, limiting their power and subordinating them to public control. The government as well as Parliament could not rely on their experiences or expect any form of cooperation.

Only in the circumstances described in Point A can one rely on the local authorities from the very beginning of the reform's implementation process. In the last two cases, the new authorities must be established first, which means that the implementation of changes will take proportionally longer and the tasks will be that much more complicated.

In the centralized system, local authorities played the role of executors for decisions made at higher levels of the administration. But upon introducing the reform, they were to become responsible for their own independent decisions made in their own name. For this to succeed, their operational methods must be amended and their mentality modified. The capability of local authorities to adapt themselves to the new tasks and responsibilities has to be analyzed in detail during the preparatory phase. If local authorities would not be able to implement the reform, the reform will undoubtedly fail.

Assuming, however, that local authorities are in favor of changes, then during this stage they can participate in designing a new model by consulting legislative works and initiate active preparations to implement a new system when the legislative process is already completed.

In that case, a realistic model for cooperation needs to be created to outline the willingness of local authorities to cooperate in the implementation process. In each country there are hundreds or thousands of self-government units. Cooperating with all of them is simply unrealistic. If there are associations that gather local authorities together, these may be used as liaison partners. But it will be an indirect route of obtaining information, and thus the information may be incomplete or deformed. Another option is also available: choose the right people, who are adequately experienced to work for municipalities, and establish direct contacts with them. These municipalities may then volunteer to conduct pilot studies, so the implementation methods can be tested.

E. Nongovernmental and Professional Organizations

The most important tasks during this stage:

- Gaining social support for the reform
- Educating social partners
- Creating a training system

1) Social Support

No local self-government can be effectively created without social support. Therefore, gaining such a support is a crucial task, which needs to be undertaken during the first two steps, with the wide participation of nongovernmental organizations.

Social support cannot be expected at the moment of the reform's initiation. Authoritarian regimes teach people to be passive and never permit them to deal with public matters. People are typically afraid of potential changes, are rather skeptical, and do not believe that their situation may improve. Complex reforms of the state administration are particularly difficult to understand and to be accepted by society. These reforms include transformations connected with decentralization and building territorial self-governance.

Local self-government may effectively operate only when the residents of a specific area constitute a community that is fully aware of its own needs and the aims it wants to achieve and is capable of managing its own local matters independently. If such a community does not exist, then the idea of local self-government appears to be questionable. Changes in social relations require a long implementation period. It needs to be assumed that people will be suspicious about any reform undertakings and local communities will slowly emerge. Thus an enormous effort must be taken to overcome social resistance, which results in lack of belief and a lack of adequate knowledge.

The primary task of this step is to create an appropriate social climate that would contribute to the reform initiation being more widely accepted by the public, whose response to the change will be more positive. The point is to not simply reject the reform at the very beginning and instead make it possible to discuss the merits of its final shape. Such a climate may be created only when information about the reform is disseminated and social dialogue mechanisms are established. Social dialogue has proven to have a significant meaning even when its scope is limited.

No ready-made recipes exist, but generally the tasks may be described as follows:

- To inform local communities about the intended changes and to highlight their advantages using domestic examples;
- To organize local communities around local problems, so people can acquire the necessary skills to express their common views and perform the common tasks aimed at the realization of common goals; and
- To professionally prepare local leaders so they can work for local self-government institutions.

The Polish Experience

In 1989, the following realization goals were set by a social movement on self-governance in Poland:

- 1) Encouraging local communities to participate in wielding power,
- 2) Improving living conditions through solving local problems together, as a group,
- 3) Jointly managing the property and resources belonging to cities and municipalities, and
- 4) Educating administrative and economic cadres of the country.

There were also four concrete tasks assigned to the movement:

- 1) To gather together and integrate local communities to deal with issues that are the most important to a specific city or municipality,
- 2) To get involved with the work of the existing, still not democratic local authorities, in order to gain more administrative experience,
- 3) To support legislative works concerning local self-government, by creating a relevant social opinion, and
- 4) To prepare local communities for the next, fully democratic elections.

The Foundation in Support of Local Democracy was created especially for this purpose: it supported local citizens' committees before local self-government authorities were established. Those committees gathered together local activists, who played a major role during the following stage, when the new authorities were already elected. The process of preparing local leaders to wield power helped avoid many difficulties in the future.

One of the best educational examples were field trips that sent a few hundred local activists to France to visit various municipalities. Each visit lasted for a couple of days. All of them proved to be very successful as they made the participants aware of the importance of reforms and convinced them of the reforms' significance.

2) Social Partners

The dissemination of the reform's goals and objectives is the main task for those non-governmental organizations that have been selected for their ability as social partners. A question could be asked here: why does the state administration not perform this task? After all, it has a well-organized apparatus at its disposal. But the answer is negative—and there are a few reasons justifying it. First of all, the administration is usually

quite reluctant to undertake any changes. Government officials will not be promoting the reform; on the contrary, they will underline its defects. The administrative apparatus will always attempt to duplicate the existing methods of work and will definitely not be encouraging the acceptance of changes.

For most post-communist countries, the administration was generally incapable of launching any effective communication programs aimed at society because of the erosion of the notion of social trust, particularly of the administration that was used previously to control the public and to limit civic freedoms. Society is suspicious of messages from the administration, as there is always the fear that it could be another attack on personal freedoms.

Therefore, a reform requires social partners who are willing to undertake changes, enjoy the confidence of society, and are believed to be credible. Lack of such partners can make the fulfillment of the reform far more difficult to achieve. Unfortunately, the above requirement is often misunderstood. Many politicians believe that decisions made inside their offices have an impact on reality. They believe they can make people happy without people's participation in the process and that afterwards people will be thankful to them for what they did. This mode of thinking may ruin any potential success of a reform.

The Polish Experience

There are many examples of negative results when social partners were not involved in a particular reform of the public sector in Poland. In 1999, a reform of the healthcare system was set to introduce many important changes. Some of those changes were contrary to the interests expressed by various groups. Those groups organized and even established a reform committee, but they understood the reforms quite differently. Other groups formed, comprised in particular of young doctors, who saw an opportunity for themselves in the proposed changes. But these groups were not strong enough to explicitly present their own views and their support for the reforms. The government and political powers behind the reform did not help these groups become more visible to the wider public. As a result, the professional environment was represented only by the reform's opponents. The opponents heavily contributed to society's negative opinion about the reforms. The government had to negotiate changes with their opponents. The situation could have looked very different if there had been a social partner, a group supporting the changes. Society would have been given a complete picture of the governmental proposals, and the government would have had various partners to discuss the reforms with, supporters not only opponents.

The best solution is to establish a social movement—a so-called reform movement that integrates all of the reform's supporters. But this is not an easy task at all. The movement's aims must be broad enough to include many groups and civil organizations, as well as inviting to as many people as possible. It should have a relevant organizational basis to approach the largest group of potential participants throughout the country. Moreover, at least minimal financial support is needed to make it possible to initiate activities before the movement is more sustainable and becomes attractive to sponsors. However, such a solution is very difficult to implement.

The Polish Experience

The concept of such a movement was created in Poland in 1989. There was a national network of local citizens' committees in place at that time and society was waiting for change, both of which established a beneficial social climate for introducing the reforms. The efforts undertaken by many of those social groups aimed at establishing the movement. Macro-regional meetings were organized to discuss the issues surrounding local self-government. A special newsletter was published for the first time. Unfortunately, the idea of a local self-government movement was not realized. This was primarily due to the lack of political will and the politicians' lack of understanding about the reform's importance.

Acquiring social partners, who enjoy society's confidence, is a major aspect of the process. It is necessary to select and partner with existing organizations, and if none exist, to establish them. There are no easy or ready-made solutions here. These must be organizations capable of performing the actual work of the reform. They could serve as a platform between society and the authorities responsible for implementing the reform. Nevertheless, one must be warned against establishing apparent partners. It will not be enough to invite a group of popular politicians and intellectuals and use their authority as a tool to support government plans. This could only satisfy individual ambitions or neutralize the opponents' activities, but it is highly unlikely that it would change social attitudes.

A plan aimed at gaining social support should be a significant element of the reform's implementation program. It should create a platform for the cooperation and the harmonization of activities with the state administration, though the operations performed by social partners must be autonomous and independent from any instructions or guidelines.

The Polish Experience

A positive example of creating a social partner and fostering a successful cooperation with that same partner is the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy, established in Poland in 1989. The Foundation generated a national network of regional training centers, which initiated a close cooperation with representatives of the government. But it was the Foundation itself and not the state administration that transmitted the idea of self-governance to the local communities.

Furthermore, the process of building social support for reform requires the involvement of professional partners, and in particular the mass media. Their assistance greatly contributes to the planning of the relevant programming that would reach much of society.

Television and radio both possess the means for the most effective transfer of information. Efforts should be undertaken to launch regularly broadcast programming about the reform and what it means to the general public. The national press, contrary to the local press, is generally not interested in decentralization issues. Any changes concerning the local authorities always attract the attention of local newspapers. Although it targets a smaller select audience, the specialist press is essential for educating cadres and provides a forum for opinions and experiences. But in order to guarantee the appropriate use of mass media, a few problems need to be solved. The role of media is the first one. Some experts say that the media should not engage in supporting governmental programs that naturally have a political character. Instead, in a quest for balance, the objections of opponents should be also included when presenting the reform program. However, this can result in negative consequences. People are generally against any changes. It will be far easier for the opponents of reform to resist than for the initiators of reform to encourage people to support them.

The activities of the media should focus less on confrontational discussions and shift their attention to educational operations: raising awareness about the necessity to introduce changes and indicating their main trends, leaving experts the task of coming up with concrete solutions, because public opinion is usually unprepared to do so.

Another argument usually raised is the audiences and readers' lack of interest in state administration matters. But one should not forget that the media have a special role to play—an educational role. People must be constantly informed and educated.

3) Training

Preparing people for the new tasks they will be performing is one of the main priorities within the framework of the reform's implementation. Without their active and professional involvement, the reform cannot be successful. People need to be equipped with practical skills. In addition, their mentality and attitude to work must be changed. The training system also should cover local politicians and leaders of civic organizations.

The existing administration must be trained as soon as possible, as its actual functioning greatly depends on this happening. Training should begin immediately after a model of the future administrative system has been designed and nearly agreed upon in the legislature, so it can be disseminated during the urgently-needed training sessions.

The system must be adjusted to train a great number of people. The training participants should include councilors, local politicians, local authority officials, and managers of decentralized institutions. Depending on the size of the country, the training needs may involve many thousands of people.

It is important to highlight the importance of training for managers and employees of enterprises. Local self-government, public services, and units taken over by local authorities will be undergoing a significant transformation. Managers must understand these changes and adequately adjust the units they supervise.

The Polish Experience

In one Polish city, a serious conflict occurred between the personnel of a city transportation enterprise and the local authorities that were assuming control over that enterprise from the state administration. In the past nobody paid attention to the cost column in a state enterprise's budget. Effectiveness on the job was rather low and personnel were accustomed to generous social benefits. With the reform, the local authorities took the role of an owner and demanded efficient work and savings. In response, the workers organized a strike to defend the previous practices.

Creating a training system is the main task within this step of the reform. It must be a network that covers the entire country since training centers ideally should be located near places of work and residence. The system requires that adequate institutions have been established and that cooperation with social partners has been initiated. This system may consist of various institutions: nongovernmental and nonprofit organizations, commercial institutions, units established by local self-government associations, or even state institutions. The role and nature of tasks assigned to the above institutions will be subject to ongoing changes, so their organization will evolve. In view of the above, the training institutions must be very flexible.

This system should be established as soon as possible and, to the extent that it is possible, it must be based on the organizations already in place. Frequently, there is no time to create something new. However, if no relevant organizations exist, new ones must be formed.

The Polish Experience

In 1989, there were no institutions that were capable of undertaking training activities in Poland. Addressing this gap was the idea behind the establishment of the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy. The Foundation began by organizing various types of training, including courses, seminars, or study-abroad visits. During the first year, trainings included a little less than 20,000 people due to lack of adequate infrastructure, programs, and lecturers. Despite being only a drop in the bucket, the trainings played a crucial role, as the participants disseminated the knowledge they acquired to others.

F. Research

Primary task: to deliver the knowledge that is essential to designing the reform program.

The reform must be based on knowledge and experience. However, in practice it can be hard to fulfill such a condition. Major problems are connected with initiating research and its organization, and the relevant cooperation of researchers and politicians.

1) Research Organization

The need for reform becomes apparent when the effectiveness of the state's functioning proves to be insufficient. Only then an adequate program of changes can be designed and adopted. A key problem is whether such a program exists at the right moment. If there is no good program in place, then government might apply all the available proposals, without having enough time for their verification. Under severe time constraints, the state has no other choice when decisions must be made urgently.

The Polish Experience

The local self-government reforms in Poland were successfully carried out primarily because there had been a program in place at the moment when the opportunity arose for the reforms to be undertaken. It was possible only because social scientists recognized a need for the reconstruction of local self-government nearly a decade earlier than politicians. Intellectuals initiated the preparatory works for the reform.

In other post-communist countries the problems and the limited scope of decentralization were caused by the fact that the new, emerging democratic governments did not have reform programs ready.

Research requires time. In order for its results to be useful, it should be initiated early enough: most preferably at the moment when no decisions related to the reform have yet been undertaken, or even when the politicians have not begun to seriously consider the need to adopt the reform. It is not easy to start research so early under authoritarian regimes, as the authorities usually impede conducting any independent research before the political decision is taken. It is, also, difficult for particular researchers to undertake research on their own initiative since there are no motivating factors for doing so at an early stage and there are many barriers to be overcome. Hence, research is generally started and conducted much later, thereby causing it to be delayed in relation to the need.

During this step of the reform a research center needs to be chosen and charged with the responsibility of supporting reformers with knowledge and information during the whole period of the reform's implementation. This choice should be the task of the steering unit, which should also provide adequate financial means. Obviously, it would be preferable to select an existing unit than to establish a new one. However, if there is no research center with an appropriate level of knowledge on local government issues, it may be necessary to pursue the second alternative. In such a case, the period for obtaining indispensable research becomes much longer.

The Polish Experience

Previous to the first reform in Poland in 1989–1990, research had been conducted for nearly ten years in a semi-legal form in existing scientific centers. It included the following:

- Research on the history of local self-government in Poland—to link a proposed system of state administration with national traditions.
- Comparative research with many other countries of Western Europe and the United States, in order to define the directions that Poland could follow. It was particularly important, because practical research could not be conducted in Poland.
- Research on current problems and what the future state administration system must deal with.
- Analysis of a local self-government model in Poland and methods of its implementation.

It can be stated with certainty that, if the above research had not been conducted, the local self-government reform would not have been undertaken in 1989 to the extent it was.

Before the second reform was initiated in 1998, research had already begun a few years earlier, conducted by groups of people associated with the opposition. In this case, the new government received a solid basis to initiate its legislative work. In both cases representatives of the opposition prepared the reform programs.

Research must be based on practical experiences. If local self-governments already exist in the country, they should contribute their own experiences to the process. Otherwise, a question arises about how these experiences can be learned by others. Usually the activities of the existing administration are a source of negative experiences. Finding models can also be very problematic. The most common answer is to look abroad and use the experiences of other countries. Certainly, collecting and analyzing such experiences is important. But one must remember that a particular state administration system takes into account local circumstances that stem from culture and tradition, the economic or social situation, or its geographic location. An automatic transfer of one country's experiences to another will not always be successful.

The Polish Experience

In Poland, researchers organized and attended many international conferences and studied abroad to learn from the experiences of other countries, but simultaneously built their own system that was based on the analysis of Poland's needs and capacities.

2) Cooperation of Researchers and Politicians

Successfully accomplishing the research hinges on the cooperation of researchers and politicians. Politicians make important decisions related to the state's development and these decisions must be based on research results and experts' knowledge, otherwise they may be inaccurate. Decision-makers must acquire access to knowledge, must be willing to use it, and must possess the relevant skills to do so.

However, politicians often do not fully appreciate the significance of research. They silently assume that they can do everything alone and that their inherent skills should be sufficient enough to design and implement the reforms. In this situation, you run the serious risk of approaching the reform unprofessionally. Every politician must be aware of the limits of his or her own knowledge. In several countries, I frequently encountered people who were responsible for the reform's implementation but who were not even able to formulate sound questions because they were unaware of gaps in their knowledge.

Experts must conduct the research. They must know how to cooperate with politicians and how to deliver the results of their evidence-based analyses to politicians in a form that can be easily used. However, there are many obstacles that must be overcome. The participation of social scientists in the state administration's transformation requires their full involvement. They must strongly believe that the reform is necessary, that it is going to be successfully implemented, and that society will benefit from it. They must fully identify themselves with the state in this regard. Yet science is the search for truth. That is why scientists try to be objective in their observations and describe the pros and cons of their findings. They are also critical about their own views.

But such attitudes must be drastically modified in order to become a reformer. By maintaining a feeling of reality, a reformer must be totally engaged in the matter. One must be certain and eliminate any doubts, and one must be able to respond to all remarks and objections made by critics and reform opponents attacking the changes. Moreover, one must be ready to take a certain risk that the early plans will fail to become reality and may be withdrawn. One must act with moderation and be capable of compromise when meeting resistance. One may undertake the most important goals while not insisting on implementing their own views even when the actual circumstances force their modification.

Good cooperation between politicians and researchers must be based on effective communication, especially when it comes to the presentation of findings, remarks, and suggestions. Papers by scientists are usually full of discussions, notes, and references, and attempt to be objective and present different opinions and arguments. Politicians have completely different expectations. They do not expect any discussion but simply answer two questions: *what* do I want to achieve? And: *how* to achieve it? The *what* and the *how* are essential. All other dissertations are understood as useless ballast.

A classic decision-making model includes the following four steps:

- 1) Assessment of the status quo—to identify all the drawbacks (elements we are unsatisfied with) and everything that must be modified.
- 2) Identification of goals, i.e., what we want to achieve.
- 3) Preparation of forecasts of independent processes that may result in positive or negative changes having an impact on us.
- 4) Preparation of a plan of activities necessary to achieve the proposed changes, which at the same time will include the results of independent processes, constituting the object of the prognoses. A goal can be achieved only by harmonizing our activities with those circumstances that are beyond our control.

For the purpose of properly elaborating an action plan, research should be conducted during all the stages of the decision-making process, although, as experience indicates, the first stages are easier for scientists to reconcile. Research is directed primarily at the description of reality, whereas an action plan very often goes beyond the limits of research, as it is normally understood. Strategic research constitutes a specific form of studies and is usually underdeveloped in those countries where knowledge and science have no influence on decisions made by politicians.

The cooperation of researchers and politicians is essential, but to make it possible both groups must know the capacities and needs of the other. Their cooperation is particularly important during the transformation process of the state administration, when many modifications are undertaken simultaneously in many different ways and when those modifications are so intense and deep-rooted as to influence the future existence of society and the state.

Step III.

Implementation

Start: Approving the legal acts that are necessary to implement the changes.

End: Completion of the implementation of fundamental changes. Certain modifications may require a longer period to accomplish.

Duration: One to two years.

Main tasks: Establishing new local self-government authorities, reorganization of institutions and local services, reassigning property.

Primary Participants: Central and local administrations, nongovernmental and professional organizations.

A. Politics

Task: monitoring changes and assisting the administration

In the previous stage crucial decisions were made describing the scope of the initiated reform and forming its legal basis. The actual implementation will take place in the following stage. Administrative units, in cooperation with nongovernmental and professional organizations, will undertake the tasks. Politicians should limit their role to monitoring and providing assistance in all situations where the reform implementation process could encounter difficulties and resistance. Then a political intervention may be necessary. In other cases, however, politicians should not play an active role and not interfere in the work performed by the administration. The reform implementation process is an administrative task, connected with fulfilling legislative decisions. There is no need to make it a political issue, as it may have a negative impact on the public's attitude towards reforms.

Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of France, once said that the commander-in-chief's role ended when his last regiment received an order to launch an attack. Afterwards the operations were to be conducted by his lieutenants. This reflects the role of politicians during this stage of the reform. The orders have been given and their fulfillment now depends on thousands of people throughout the country. The command center cannot

perform any actions instead of them and it does not have any direct influence on their activities. The future of the reform also depends on the action plan and whether it has been properly prepared, whether clear directives have been adopted, and whether the right people have been selected to implement these directives in an effective way.

B. Legislation

Task: Corrections and supplements

During this step, in theory, no legislative work should be carried out, as all the important legal acts should have been adopted in the previous step. In practice, however, the legislative work will be continued. Decentralization reforms require so many changes to be made in the legislative system that all of them cannot be performed in a short-term period. The less important changes may be postponed for later. Such a solution can be justified by organizational reasons but it creates a risk of failure to complete the reform as originally planned.

At the same time, it must be taken into account that making a mistake or omission is very easy when implementing such extensive changes to a legal system. Therefore, the immediate adoption of supplements or corrections in the course of action may become a real necessity. The crucial issue shall be the speed of executing the repairs. Leaving mistakes uncorrected may discredit the idea of the reform itself.

The Polish Experience

Poland's reform implementation process was undertaken in great haste in 1989 and under immense time pressure. It resulted in making a few omissions while pursuing the legislative process. The most spectacular ones were related to the civil registry offices. During the previous regime, a chief executive of a local administration had been authorized to supervise these offices and issue all certificates, including the certification of marriages. In the new system these were taken over by the mayor, who at the same time acquired the possibility of transferring them to the office manager of the civil registry. Appointing a new mayor, however, requires a certain amount of time and only the mayor had the right to appoint a manager. During the legislative reworking, the provision stating that a previous manager could perform his functions until a new one could be appointed had been somehow "lost." In view of this, on the day after the elections there was not a single person in the entire country who was authorized to officiate marriages because previous officers had lost their competences and new ones were not yet appointed. But, thanks to immediate action in Parliament, the law was amended and the mistake corrected.

C. Central Administration

In the following step of the reform, the steering unit should perform the tasks for which it has been created. These tasks constitute the core of the reform. The unit must be at the center of coordinating all the activities taking place simultaneously throughout the country.

The primary tasks of the unit during this stage shall be as follows:

- 1) Drafting and immediately adopting all executive acts, as stated in the law,
- 2) Coordinating activities performed by other central administration units, in regards to transferring competences and properties to local authorities,
- 3) Assisting local authorities in undertaking transformations, and
- 4) Solving disputes, which may arise in connection with the changes being performed.

1) Drafting the Executive Acts

The state's system of administration is described in general in legal acts, voted on by parliament, while the details are specified in executive orders issued by the government or particular ministers. The issuance of these acts is essential for the implementation process to be initiated. These acts must be adopted as soon as possible. The steering unit shall be responsible for performing this task. There will always be a risk that particular ministries, reluctant to introduce changes, may hinder the adoption of executive acts or make attempts to decrease the scope of changes to be done.

The Polish Experience

The central bureaucracy will always oppose changes that limit their competences. During the reform implementation period in Poland, I expressed my anxiety on numerous occasions to the particular prime minister in office about various ministries impeding the reforms. I was assured that everything had been arranged with those ministries, and they expressed their support for the reform. In practice, however, the ministries were greatly influenced by the bureaucracy, to which decentralization constituted a real threat. Therefore, quite often, despite their assurances, the ministries defended themselves against change. There were many examples of this in Poland.

2) Changes Introduced in Central Offices

Decentralization limits the competences of many institutions at the central level. They will be obliged to transfer their competences to local authorities, as well as properties and different service delivery units. There may be difficulties or resistance while completing the task. Meanwhile, any delays may result in losses and diminish the effect of reform.

The Polish Experience

An attempt was undertaken in Poland to transfer the state enterprises that managed health resorts to local governments. Those enterprises were responsible for providing medical treatment, administrating sanatoriums and medical equipment, exploiting thermal waters, and organizing entertainment activities for patients and visitors. The resistance against this was so strong that the attempt failed. The Ministry of Health, which supervised these enterprises, protested because such a transfer would result in a number of jobs being eliminated. Trade unions also protested against it, and even doctors, who preferred to have their contracts concluded with the ministry rather than with local authorities.

3) Assisting Local Authorities

Providing assistance to local self-government authorities will be one of the most important tasks of the steering unit. A subsidiary regional executive apparatus, which was created in the previous step of the reform, will undertake this task directly. Specialists employed within the apparatus are to cooperate with local authorities.

The Polish Experience

In 1990, regional representatives of the minister in charge of the reform assisted the newly-formed local governments in dealing with the following issues:

- 1) Explaining and interpreting legal provisions
- 2) Assisting in drawing up municipal statutes and offices' regulations
- 3) Undertaking institutional changes by participating in negotiating the division of tasks, organizing intermunicipality unions, etc.
- 4) Assuming control of transferred real estate

- 5) Assuming control of public service delivery enterprises and the necessary transformations thereof
- 6) Assuming control of and adjusting to new demands of public service units, like schools or healthcare institutions
- 7) Developing training programs and organizing training sessions
- 8) Organizing contacts and cooperating with branches of the state government administration, social and political organizations, and research centers

The primary task in 1998 was liquidating redundant offices, establishing new ones and transferring personnel, administration buildings, equipment, and even entire public institutions to the new local and regional self-governments.

The steering unit should monitor the work of this apparatus, provide consultancy and advisory services, and interfere if a conflict situation occurs. But the following tasks should be performed centrally:

- Drafting sample statutes, regulations, and other documents that local authorities will need later. This will facilitate their work and avoid unnecessary trouble and difficulties that arise from solving complicated legal dilemmas.
- Representing the interests of local self-governments. When the reform is initiated, the units that are to operate in the future are either non-existent or have a totally different character. Because they are unable to effectively represent their own interests, there is a risk that the decisions being made will be disadvantageous for them. The steering unit responsible for the reform must, therefore, simultaneously represent the interests of the newly established units under its supervision.
- An effective system to transfer information among all the units providing assistance to local authorities is required. Inevitably, there will be difficult problems to solve.
- An adequate base of expertise for the steering unit needs to be established. Disputes over the interpretation of the reform's implementation will result in the need to interpret and explain recently adopted legal provisions. The interpretation process must be initiated promptly and the results disseminated immediately for the uniform application of the relevant laws. As the steering unit is responsible, it should have a team of experienced lawyers dealing with these tasks. However, as a government unit, its interpretative powers are limited. Hence, the rules of procedure in relation to the interpretation of the laws should be prepared much earlier, in agreement with the relevant courts or parliament. It is advisable to establish permanent cooperation with selected professional and research organizations.

4) Solving Disputes

The implementation of changes, and particularly the transfer of properties, always creates many disputes. Here, a system for solving these disputes in the most expedient way is essential to keeping the reform alive. A relevant legal framework should be created during the legislative phase. The steering unit, however, is responsible for establishing adequate institutions and procedures and then ensuring their effective functioning.

Problems that were not foreseen and that do not fit under any existing procedure will occur along the way. The steering unit should play the role of a negotiator who is responsible for finding a solution that will not block the reform. One must bear in mind that the most important aspect of the entire process is that the reform has taken effect and been accepted by society. Any dispute cannot be unreasonably prolonged and final decisions must not be postponed, even in the name of searching for the best solution. In general, losses may be minimized by quick decisions, although they may not be the best resolution, rather than by negotiations lasting for several months.

D. Local Government

Tasks:

- 1) To set up new authorities
- 2) To adopt a statute, regulations, and other provisions regulating their operations
- 3) To reorganize the existing offices or form new ones that are prepared to take over new tasks and responsibilities
- 4) To assume the competences and responsibilities of dealing with specific administrative matters
- 5) To control their new institutions and enterprises
- 6) To assume control of properties

The transformation of the structure of local authorities is the core aspect of decentralization reform. That is why the tasks that local authorities are obliged to fulfill in this stage are of crucial importance. The authorities must undertake an enormous amount of organizational work directly after their establishment. They are in serious need of support from the central administration as well as from nongovernmental and professional organizations. Depending on the character and scope of the reform and the binding provisions of law, these tasks may be very different.

The Polish Experience

The reforms in Poland, a country of 38 million people, can serve as an example of the scope of these changes.

During the first stage of the reform in 1990:

- nearly 90,000 public servants were transferred to municipalities,
- municipalities took over approximately 1,500 state enterprises, and
- several million real estate units were transferred to municipalities.

Between the years of 1990 and 1996, 18,500 elementary schools were taken over by municipalities.

During the second stage of the reform in 1999:

- 740 administrative offices were liquidated, reorganized, or formed,
- 9,500 service delivery units changed their subordination.

1) New Authorities

The scope of the task to be executed depends on the scope of the reform. When local self-government is already in place and the reform concerns only expanding its competences, then there is no need for changing local authorities. But, if the existing system is not considered to be local self-government and does not represent local communities, then it is necessary to hold local elections and establish new authorities. In this situation the reform implementation process may be considerably prolonged.

The Polish Experience

In 1998, when local self-government was introduced in Poland at the district and regional levels, the elections of new authorities had been held a few months before the actual transfer of power, so they could have time to establish and prepare themselves to assume the new responsibilities.

2) Statutes and Regulations

The decentralization of an administration results in significant changes in the functioning of authorities and the local administration. These changes require introducing the relevant modifications to the existing organization and methods of work. New statutes and regulations must be adopted. A statute constitutes the basic law regulating the operations of various authorities and administration. Hence, it is the key document for local democracy. It should be widely disseminated, so the population will be aware of who is responsible for what and what are the working rules applied by local self-government authorities. Regulations should specify all the procedures used in relation to particular issues at stake and particular organizational units. As mentioned earlier, it is extremely helpful to draft sample statutes and regulations and deliver them to authorities early in the process.

3) Reorganization of Offices

The scope of the changes taking place makes it necessary to reorganize existing offices. Their internal organization, and often their size, nature of operations, and even location must undergo further modifications. Personnel changes must be made with regard to many employment positions. New work methods must be elaborated with regard to the financial economy, management over properties, or subordinate institutions. All of this requires new skills and new organization. In many cases the adaptation or reconstruction of offices must be carried out. Sometimes the equipment requires changing. Professional organizations can provide assistance with this.

4) Taking over New Tasks

Assuming the responsibilities and competences of a broader scope of administrative matters requires concluding agreements about the takeover process, ensuring the continuity of administrative procedures, and assisting in solving cases that are in progress. It will be necessary to take over all documents and archives in the possession of other institutions. This will be a very important but difficult task.

5) Assuming Control of Local Institutions and Enterprises

By gaining autonomy, local self-governments assume responsibility for public service delivery. As a result, they have to gain control over a series of institutions and enterprises. Schools, museums, community centers, or health service centers are usually auto-

mous units. Thus local self-governments can assume control by one act, including their personnel and properties. Such a transfer does not require any changes to be made to their internal organization.

On the other hand, these units, which constituted state-owned enterprises up till now, must be transformed to some degree. Among the units are water supply and sewage services, city transportation companies, refuse collection, heating plants, and companies maintaining public parks. These transformations may include the following:

- **Changes in the areas of work:** In many cases their previous areas of work did not correspond to the boundaries of local self-government units. Therefore, it may prove necessary to divide these local self-government units or to create intermunicipal agreements to supervise common enterprises.
- **Changes in the scope of work:** They usually happen when the enterprises were rendering services that covered a large area of the country, which has been divided to adjust to the local self-government boundaries. Very small units emerged as a result of the reform process. Then the next step is needed to decrease the costs: integration of those small units into bigger communal enterprises providing services in several fields.
- **Changes in the legal status:** Enterprises subject to takeover often were previously state-owned enterprises. After the reform these businesses become municipal enterprises. In some countries it requires a change in the legal status of their operations.

In specific situations there could also be other reasons justifying the reorganization of the units subject to takeover.

6) Assuming Properties

Leasehold enfranchisement of municipalities means that the authorities must take over a significant number of properties on behalf of the local self-government.

The possession of its own properties by local self-government shall be the main condition of its actual autonomy. Yet, this is not commonly understood. In many countries, where the communist regime lasted longer, the notion of ownership faded over time. Very often, ownership is not separated from the public property administration and people do not attach great importance to the actual enfranchisement of local self-governments.

The enfranchisement of local authorities is an extremely difficult operation. The property to be handed over encompasses many elements, such as land, buildings, infrastructure (roads and networks of different types), and technical equipment (water purification plants, water intake sources, incineration plants, landfills, etc.). There is a

very large amount of real estate within a given country. Its takeover requires many formal actions regarding the registering of ownership rights and is closely linked with various *rights and liabilities of third parties*. After the reform, the execution of these rights and fulfillment of these obligations shall be a new task of local authorities.

Legal acts should specify the procedure of assuming various properties. Local authorities must perform the major activities related thereto, and this requires an adequate level of organization.

The Polish Experience

The inventory of properties, which was under the management of the previously existing local state administration, constituted the main element of procedure related to the takeover of property by local authorities in Poland. Mayors were primarily responsible for preparing these inventories. The sooner they were prepared, the earlier the property could be handed over. In view of this, portions of the inventory were prepared, allowing successive takeover of properties by local self-governments. Once consent from a state administration representative had been obtained, local authorities had to undertake a formal proceeding, by making the relevant entries in the cadastre about their new formal ownership rights on a per property basis.

The preparation of motions of transferred property was another serious task because it had not previously been within the scope of responsibilities of municipalities. Local authorities were also responsible for filing appeals against negative administrative decisions related to property. In effect, this meant that the scope of property being transferred depended on the initiative and activities of local authorities.

E. Nongovernmental and Professional Organizations

Tasks:

- 1) To assist the newly created local self-governments
- 2) To educate the administration

1) Assisting Local Self-governments

While implementing the reform and introducing changes, the groups that will lose or assume a disadvantageous position will increasingly object. Local self-government

authorities will be under pressure from various reform opponents. In order to resist this opposition, local self-governments need to be supported by society. If not supported, they will find themselves in an extremely complicated situation. It is exceptionally difficult to implement a reform that is designed to serve society without the support of society. It is difficult to believe in the idea of reform when the population does not support it. Without such support, coupled with the local self-government's involvement, these reforms cannot be successful.

Ideally, nongovernmental organizations should cooperate with local authorities during the transformation process and help build social confidence. It is advantageous when local authorities establish permanent cooperation with selected organizations. Their tasks should focus on the following problems:

- Representing the interests of particular groups of people and indicating to the authorities the problems crucial to those people and possible solutions
- Providing assistance when solving conflicts, whereby professional organizations should use their knowledge to search for compromise and civil organizations may play the role of moderators
- Building bridges of understanding between local authorities and the community and building support for the reform by explaining to the public what the reform's goals are, organizing the transfer of information, building a civil society aware of community of interests, and developing the appreciation of its responsibility for its own future

2) Educating the Administration

This step of the reform should primarily focus on educating the administration and training should start immediately. Therefore, all preparations in the previous step, concerning selection of institutions and their equipment, drawing up programs, training lecturers, etc., are needed in order to initiate this step. The aim of training is twofold:

- Overcoming psychological barriers related to the lack of belief in the reform's success
- Equipping the administration with the minimum level of knowledge and skills necessary to perform the relevant work in the new circumstances

Overcoming psychological barriers is very often unnoticed and frequently ignored; yet mental changes constitute a necessary condition for the success of the reform. A lack of belief in one's work considerably limits the ability to undertake efforts to learn something important.

The easiest way to overcome this barrier is to show that others have solved similar problems and achieved quite visible successes. Training visits abroad should serve the above purpose. In the past, local politicians and officials had very few opportunities to learn about the experiences of decentralized countries. Hence, they were still convinced that there were no alternatives to the existing system. They had to be persuaded not only about other possibilities but also about the need to work differently and that changes are within their reach. It is not about conducting deeper research but only about encouraging support for the reforms and eliminating concerns. That is why visits abroad may be short but should be organized to include as many participants as possible.

The Polish Experience

In 1989 and 1990, study visits were organized for more than a thousand people from Poland. Many others had a chance to establish individual contacts. All these contacts motivated people to increase their own qualifications. Sometimes we played on their ambition, asking: "Do you think that you are less intelligent than those people? If not, then you are capable of doing the same or even better!" The result was always positive.

In the beginning of 1992, a seminar gathered together representatives of other post-communist countries in Krakow. To convince them to accept the idea of self-governance, a city tour was organized, instead of preliminary lectures on the importance of decentralization. During the tour, participants walked along the streets of Krakow, visiting shops and observing the everyday life of its residents. The results were better than expected. A contrast between Krakow and cities in their own countries was so visible that all doubt regarding the need for reform in their own countries disappeared.

The administration must be immediately equipped with the basic knowledge and all relevant skills. It is necessary to prepare an essential knowledge compendium, which should be handed over to local self-government officers and made available to all people involved in the reform's implementation. The compendium must be condensed so the knowledge included therein can be transferred effectively and easily acquired. There is no time for organizing long courses during this stage of the reform. The administration must immediately undergo reform and start working under new circumstances.

These knowledge compendiums should be differentiated depending on the tasks performed by the particular groups of recipients. Councilors, that is, local politicians, must constitute a separate group. Other separate groups should include officers of particular departments and administrative units because the informational materials must reflect their various official specialties. Separate materials should also be addressed to managers of municipal enterprises or public services units taken over by local authorities. It is not

possible to educate each and every person about all the aspects of the administrative work. Therefore, the actual needs must be taken into account and a limited scope of knowledge should be promptly transferred to the largest possible group of recipients.

Besides technical knowledge, there are issues that should be included into the curricula of all courses, particularly problems connected with social responsibility and ethics. The officials and politicians must understand as soon as possible that they are representing the interests of local communities. They receive remuneration for their work and that money actually comes from people, who in effect become their clients, who they render their services to, and who they did not treat properly in the past. Raising the awareness about new linkages connecting officials with their clients will contribute to the success of the new administration system.

During the reform's preparation and implementation, one must always remember that success depends primarily on people. It depends on their emotional involvement in the realization of their new tasks and their acquired knowledge and skills. Adopting new laws will not be enough if there is no one capable of using these new possibilities. Cooperation with society and the education of the administration cadre shall guarantee the success of the reforms.

F. Research

Task: current assistance in solving difficulties provided to central and local administrations

No concrete remarks or recommendations may be specified here. In the previous stage, a research center rendering services to decision-makers was created. Now, in this stage, it should be operating in an effective way and be capable of providing current consultancy services in relation to the implementation process.

Step IV. Consolidation

Start: At the completion of the implementation of the main changes.

End: Not explicit. The work on the reform will gradually stop as the changes are consolidated.

Duration: A few years, difficult to specify.

Main tasks: Consolidation of the changes adopted, so they become a permanent element of the national system of administration and are recognized by society.

Primary Participants: Local authorities and the central administration.

The Character of the Process

The reform's implementation does not end when the legal acts are adopted or when the reorganization of institutions is undertaken. The process still continues. Certain transformations will require longer periods of time and will be carried out even after the reform's implementation is considered complete. The reform will initiate an entire chain of secondary changes, which will emerge in an evolutionary way and will need to be monitored. The process of rebuilding local self-government modifies the entire sector of public life.

The Polish Experience

The scope of incidental changes that took place in Poland following the process of rebuilding self-government was rather surprising. The changes obviously occurred in the local economy, in the management of self-governmental properties, and in public service delivery, but they also caused significant social changes, including the rapid development of nongovernmental organizations. Local press and radio stations were also established. The organizations and enterprises providing services to local authorities underwent rapid development. Moreover, these changes reached the banks, which began to compete over rendering services to local authorities, not only in regard to current bank accounts, but also in regard to credit and other more complicated financial services.

These changes need to be consolidated, so they can become an irreversible element of the system. Opponents will still attempt to limit or eliminate the effects of those changes. At the same time, a feeling of weariness caused by the long process of the reform's implementation may demobilize support and may contribute to important matters being left unsolved. This may also occur if the process is prematurely considered complete. There is also a risk that it will mainly concern the most complicated issues, very often constituting the core element of the entire reform.

The failure to complete the reform or consolidate changes may waste all the efforts undertaken to accomplish the reform's goals. So-called "half reforms" do not usually bring about anything important and very often undermine social confidence in the authorities who were the reform initiators. Political aims will not be achieved and gaining support for further reforms to be adopted in the future will be questionable. That is why the period of consolidation of changes is so crucial. It is a long-term process, although it is not possible to specify how long. It is not even possible to demarcate "the end." Local self-governments will develop slowly and eventually the new system will be considered normal.

The transformation of the state administration cannot be carried out by adopting only one reform. Hence, following the end of one reform, the next one must be initiated. Even in well-developed states, reforms are necessary to adjust the administration system to ever evolving circumstances. This consolidation period will slowly transform into the process of conceptualizing new changes.

The Polish Experience

The intermingling of succeeding stages of the reform was very visible in Poland. The first stage, establishing local self-governments within municipalities, had been completed in 1991. At the same time, certain activities had been initiated with regard to the second stage, concerning the establishment of local self-governments at higher levels of the administration. After an unsuccessful attempt in 1993, the work was continued and finally completed in a much broader scope in 1999. In the following years more changes were carried out in order to further develop the idea of self-governance.

A. Politics

In this stage politicians are to perform three tasks:

- 1) Assess the effects of the reforms
- 2) Consolidate and correct the accomplished changes
- 3) Initiate discussions about further stages of the reform

1) Assessment of the Effects Achieved

The end of the implementation of the changes makes it possible to undertake the assessment of the effects achieved. In Part One we presented the potential criteria to assess the level of state decentralization. From these criteria, we need to select those that will be the most adequate for the purposes of the initiated reform and the existing local circumstances. The assessment mechanism should embody various areas, and in particular public administration matters of an economic, social, and political character, and physical development. The assessment should be successively repeated because the evolution of different factors may lead to significant changes.

The crucial aspect of the above is the social perception of the reform's effects. If these are positively assessed by society, the reform shall be considered successful. But in order to positively assess the reforms, people must "feel" their positive consequences. Social assessment may also evolve with time. It may happen that enthusiasm observed at the beginning will disappear, signs of impatience and disappointment will appear, and people will say that their expectations were not met. It may also happen that people will recognize the changes undertaken as normal and after a while they will not be able to remember that the situation looked different in the past. This may be considered successful, although the reform itself will not settle in people's minds for long.

2) Consolidation of Changes

Politicians are to play a serious role in the process of consolidating changes. First of all, they must secure the changes from any pressure of recentralization. Resistance against the reform will not decrease with time, but it will change in its nature. Each bureaucracy has a tendency to expand its scope and influences. Decentralization considerably limits the powers assigned to certain central institutions. People from these institutions will continuously aim at restoring their previous influence. If their efforts coincide with centralist tendencies of certain parties, a dangerous power may be created that could destroy reformatory endeavors.

The Polish Experience

Decentralization had come so far that it became a permanent element of Poland's administration system. However, in particular areas, as a result of pressure from various political and professional groups, negative changes were also occurring. It concerned, for example, veterinary and sanitary services, which were excluded from the scope of competences of regional authorities, and subordinated again to the ministries. It was due to this that these services expanded their influence. There are many more similar examples of recentralization.

Experience shows that the original objectives for the reforms are not always confirmed in reality. Introduction of the reform creates a brand new framework for the activities of people and initiates new processes, which are very often unpredictable. Therefore, it is necessary to continuously monitor the adopted changes and undertake interventions when the processes move in the wrong direction.

As time goes by, each institution identifies its own goals, connected primarily with its own pace of development. New models of human conduct are established. New types of events, not always in line with reform objectives, are created. Such events are difficult to predict and practically impossible to eliminate. They might lead to the development and strengthening of local self-government, but in other cases they could lead to problems.

The Polish Experience

The consequences of reform can be observed only over a longer period of time. An example from Poland is the evolution of mayors. It had been assumed in the beginning that municipalities were managed collectively by councils, boards, and mayors appointed by councils. Nobody had expected the rise of institutional conflicts and competing ambitions, first between mayors and council chairs, and later, between mayors and entire councils. Under the pressure of the mayors, a remedy was adopted: the competences of councils were limited, and the mayoral authority was strengthened. By handing over the entire executive power to mayors directly elected by their constituents, it resulted in rejecting a model of collective management. It improved the functioning of municipal authorities, but at the same time caused significant changes within the administration system, revealing dangers unanticipated in the beginning.

It is not possible to create an ideal system. There will be always difficulties along the way. It is necessary to continuously monitor the reform's effects and to correct the system as needs arise. One must be cautious about the irrational optimism that everything has been thoroughly considered and the adopted legal acts will be binding without any need of change for many years. The authors of the reform must behave submissively from the very beginning and be prepared to introduce necessary amendments.

3) Discussion about the Next Stage of the Reforms

The end of each stage of the reform should constitute a starting point for the discussion about the next stage. The sooner these discussions start, the more time there is to adequately prepare for the changes. Politicians are obliged to think about the future of the country, to anticipate the difficulties that may arise, and to perform the strategic activities that will easily overcome these difficulties.

B. Legislation

Main tasks:

- 1) Monitoring of the effects of reforms
- 2) Amending legal acts to adjust them to changing circumstances and to eliminate occurring defects

Members of parliament, as politicians maintaining permanent contacts with their voters, can play an important role in monitoring the effects of the changes and transfer their observations to parliament and particular government units. These observations should include the prerequisites for adopting the necessary corrections to the legal acts. They should also initiate discussions regarding the next stages of state administration reform.

Even well-prepared legal acts often require corrections because, when confronted with reality, the mistakes and inconsistencies are revealed and the evolution of changes has progressed differently than originally expected. These corrections should be adopted immediately to minimize any potential troubles. The need to adopt corrections should be recognized as a normal operation and not as a defeat of the reform. It is a dangerous tendency when necessary amendments are unduly hampered by reform authors, in the name of ambition, but wrongly perceived.

The Polish Experience

The Polish Act on Local Self-government is considered a well-drafted document, which introduced the proper solutions to the problems of the time. Nevertheless, it has been repeatedly amended since its adoption. So, in 1990, when it was adopted, it was amended three times. In 1991, only once; in 1992, there were two amendments; and in 1993, 1994, 1995, and 1996, the Act was amended once each year. All in all, there were ten amendments during the first seven years the act was in force. These were minor changes, connected with the elimination of difficulties as well as with the adoption of new laws in other areas.

C. Central Administration

Task: consolidation of introduced changes

The steering unit shall not stop performing its tasks when major changes are implemented. It should exist until consolidation of the changes is complete and local self-governments are strong enough to independently deal with their own matters. Upon fulfillment of its tasks, the steering unit should form a part of the ministry of administration or any other government institution responsible for supervising local self-governments' operations.

The Polish Experience

The office of the government and the network of its representatives existed until the end of 1991 in Poland, that is, for more than a year and a half after local elections had been held. In 1999, the plenipotentiary was dismissed a few months after the local self-government authorities became active, but a relevant vice-minister of administration maintained an obligation to control the consequences of the reforms for a few years.

The activities of the steering unit in the consolidation period of the reform should be directed at the following:

- 1) Monitoring changes
- 2) Counteracting recentralization
- 3) Assisting local authorities

- 4) Fighting against corruption
- 5) Strengthening assisting institutions
- 6) Professionalization of the local administration

1) Monitoring

It is essential to monitor and supervise the progressing changes. Therefore, a permanent system of monitoring is necessary to cover not only the monitoring of administrative changes, but all the consequences of the reform occurring in the social, economic, and physical development spheres. The conclusions and the assessment should be used to make adequate corrections of the administration system being constructed, to eliminate barriers hampering the decentralization process, to counteract recentralization tendencies, and to draft the next stages of the reform. The monitoring system should be operating when the steering unit is liquidated. It can form a part of the central administration, but the tasks can be transferred to a relevant research unit. Then a stabilized system of financing must be created.

The Polish Experience

No adequate solution was found in Poland in regards to monitoring. Monitoring was conducted only during the period when the government plenipotentiaries responsible for the reforms were performing their tasks. Later on, that role was taken over by local self-government unions. Failure to establish an organized monitoring system led to many difficulties in directing the next stages of the reforms. Moreover, it contributed to a lack of resistance to recentralization activities undertaken by various ministries and other institutions connected thereto.

2) Counteracting Recentralization

It is to be expected that various institutions and interest groups will attempt to recentralize the system, even a few years after the reform itself has been completed. The initiators will submit various arguments, but their main goal will be always to restore their previous authority or privileges. These attempts may lead to the defeat of the reform. Whenever it is justified, the steering unit should undertake the relevant interventions.

3) Assisting Local Authorities

A new administrative system will undoubtedly cause many problems that local authorities must solve. Assistance may take many different forms, from intervention and assistance provided during negotiations, to the need to amend legal acts. At the same time, it is advisable to create incentives for local authorities, so they will constantly improve the organization of their offices and services rendered to residents. This cannot be done by giving orders, preparing reports, or organizing controls because it would infringe on the autonomy of local self-governments, which was the goal of the reform. But the incentives may include competitions and awards.

4) Fighting Against Corruption

One must pay attention to the risk of corruption. In countries undergoing this transformation, corruption is particularly dangerous, as public authorities have huge resources of nationalized property at their disposal. The probability of corruption is much higher than in those countries with a stabilized system of administration, where the authorities never had so much property under their control. Such negative circumstances cannot constitute an excuse for hampering reforms. They should be eliminated by creating relevant systems of control, but above all by:

- eliminating potential corrupt practices, by liquidating gaps in legislation, which make such practices possible;
- introducing standards of transparency for administrative decisions; and
- raising society's awareness about the results of corruption and supporting those movements that aim to reconfigure society's attitude toward corruption from casual social acceptance to social rejection of the practice.

5) Strengthening Assisting Institutions

The central administration is not able to directly perform many of the tasks enumerated so far, particularly because their fulfillment requires continuous activities to be carried out and the steering unit must be liquidated at some point. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen and assist in developing nongovernmental and professional organizations, as local authorities will need their assistance in this matter. It primarily concerns all institutions responsible for providing education for the local administration.

6) Professionalization of the Local Administration

The effectiveness of operations conducted by the local administration mainly depends on their employees. Therefore, the efforts aimed at professionalization and stabilization of the local administration need to be constant. The system of administration development is crucial. It is a system that should offer interesting working conditions, attract good employees, provide opportunities for professional career development, and at the same time, require qualifications to be improved on a regular basis. Any activities of the central administration may not infringe on freedoms enjoyed by local self-governments, which have been introduced by the reform.

D. Local Governments

Tasks:

- 1) To adapt local administration to the self-governance
- 2) To create and stabilize effective management

1) Adapting to Self-governance

Local leaders, in order to cope with new challenges, must adjust their own mentality to the new circumstances. The character and tasks of local self-government authorities differ considerably from the activities carried out by the local state administration. These discrepancies may differ, depending on the scope and nature of the reform, but they will definitely occur. Local authorities must be aware of this fact and must adjust their work to the new situation.

Responsibility: Before the reform, local authorities were responsible for development to a small extent. They were primarily responsible for implementing instructions. Now they must act on their own responsibility.

Independence from central authorities: A feeling of hierarchical dependency is deeply rooted in the mentality of public officials and significantly limits their ability to act independently. However, local self-government is independent in its decision-making and is subject to the law and not other institutions.

Meaning of social support: In authoritarian regimes, the authorities bear responsibility for keeping a tight rein on society. They consider themselves superior to the rest of the population. It seems to be difficult for them to understand their

role as servants to society. They tend to not acknowledge that they must look for people's support.

Publicity and transparency: The administration often does not respect its citizens. Therefore, it finds it difficult to accept the need to inform society about decisions and to submit explanations.

Cooperation with nongovernmental organizations: In authoritarian regimes, any form of societal organization is considered a threat to the system and its authority, but local self-government is based on an organized society, capable of freely presenting its own opinions.

Understanding the real meaning of transformation requires a longer period of time and is crucial for its ultimate success. But changes in the public and administration's mentality are slow to progress and are time-consuming; they usually begin only when the reform has already taken effect. Whether the reform is successful greatly depends on how quickly local self-government authorities understand the meaning of the changes and how quickly they adjust to the new changes.

The Polish Experience

In 1989, we were faced with a dilemma in Poland: whether to immediately organize local elections to strip authority from the employees of the previous communist administration or whether to first initiate state administration reforms and then hold elections. There was strong pressure to dismiss the existing councilors and administrative personnel. We strongly opposed this, as we felt that installing new people in the old legal system would have petrified the existing system and made it practically impossible to introduce reform in the future. The elections were postponed for half a year to allow the new people to adjust to the newly established system and to develop their enthusiasm for supporting local self-government.

The relation between the authorities and local communities requires particular attention. It is the core aspect of local self-government, a system of administration where people should govern themselves. The main goal of the reform should be obtaining social satisfaction. Whether the reform will be considered a success depends on society's assessment of the process. It is during this step that such an assessment is conducted. Local self-government authorities are responsible for undertaking all necessary efforts so that the assessment will be positive. Only then will the authorities enjoy society's confidence and support.

The issues related to social assessment and acceptance of the reform's effects require a lot of attention. People must experience improvements as a result of the reforms, and then they will judge them successful. If their living standards have improved and their life is easier after the reforms, then they will appreciate the reforms. Local authorities must acknowledge their full responsibility for satisfying the needs of the residents under their jurisdiction. They should give their residents an opportunity to present their ideas and authorities should inform society of their plans and decisions.

Thus an opportunity arises for effective feedback, whereby a new system of administration encourages the development of local communities, aware of their own aims and needs, and that, in turn, considerably strengthens the system of administration. To obtain this positive feedback, it is necessary to create the relevant relationships between authorities and society, to disseminate knowledge about the essence of local self-government and the benefits of its functioning, and finally to ensure the actual participation of society in exercising authority.

Local authorities are responsible for developing this mechanism by creating partnerships and cooperating with society through civic organizations that group people together to deal with the most important local issues. The success of a state's transformation depends on a strong civil society, the establishment of which depends to a great extent on the attitude presented by local authorities. Local self-government is, in essence, the education of a civil society.

The Polish Experience

The Polish experience indicates that cooperation with nongovernmental organizations is not always successful. Sometimes officials treat these organizations not as partners, but as petitioners, or worse, as competitors. On the other hand, these organizations are often heavy-handed and play the role of auditors or supervisors, not understanding that some form of parallel cooperation should be their primary role, at least according to the view of the central government.

Local authorities also must overcome negative practices. Corruption is one of them. It is extremely likely that negative practices will occur at some point during the process. They happen, first and foremost, where politics and economics meet and where authorities have large amounts of property at their disposal. The risk of corruption is much higher during the period of property transformation, which takes place during the decentralization process. In post-communist countries the fight against corruption is hindered because public opinion on this matter was stifled under their totalitarian regimes, so it cannot be used as anti-corruption mechanism. In addition, in many cases

public property is considered to belong to no one and, as such, not respected, thus making corrupt practices socially acceptable. That is why, in order to combat corruption, a thorough transformation of the existing customs and social behaviors must be undertaken.

The fight against corruption is imperative because, besides material losses it may cause, corruption seriously undermines the public's confidence in local self-government and its authorities. A spiraling, negative consequence of the public's tolerance for corruption is that it allows corrupt officials to continue to exploit their positions for corrupt purposes. Combating corruption, besides creating a relevant system of control, should be directed at:

- eliminating the causes and potential circumstances where corruption may occur, by setting up adequate procedures,
- introducing standards of openness regarding the decision-making and transparency of administrative work, and
- shaping public opinion to condemn corrupt practices.

2) Competent Management

The introduction of changes in itself does not mean that the goals of reforms have been achieved. Local authorities must still perform an enormous amount of work to properly understand and implement the newly created opportunities. One could prepare the following list of problems to be solved:

Knowledge of new laws: The reform causes an avalanche of legal amendments. The authorities must know all the new regulations. There is a great risk of making decisions that may be contrary to the law.

Organization of offices, including computerization: Quality, professionalization, and efficiency of administration—these are the conditions for a good assessment of the reform's effects. Local authorities must introduce modern forms of organization and equipment to their offices.

Economy and management: Decentralization also includes business activity, which needs to be adjusted to the existing rules on the market. A nearly complete transformation of transferred enterprises is inevitable.

Finance: Financial autonomy of local authorities creates new possibilities, but at the same time increases their level of responsibility. They must cope with the new challenges and learn to use new financial mechanisms.

Building development strategy: Local authorities are primarily responsible for implementing local development policy, specifying its policy goals and the methods for accomplishing its objectives. The creation of a development strategy requires a remarkable amount of knowledge.

Physical planning and land development: Local authorities will assume the ownership of many properties and are responsible for land-use policy. Planning requires a certain amount of specialist knowledge and relevant skills.

Investments: Local authorities start acting as serious investors and bear responsibility for the proper programming and financing and for the effective realization of any investments. They need specialist knowledge, exceeding qualifications normally acquired by government officials.

Training of personnel: An adequate quality of administrative personnel is a condition for the success of decentralization. This results in an enormous amount of training tasks, requiring the assistance of relevant subsidiary institutions.

International cooperation: New competences enable local self-government authorities to establish contacts and cooperation with local authorities in other countries and with international organizations. Acquiring new skills is necessary.

Two problems should be highlighted here. The first problem concerns **creating an individual economic system, as each municipality became an independent economic actor**. Enfranchising local self-governments and granting them the right to conduct their own business activities obligates them to carry out far-reaching changes related to organizing and increasing society's awareness of how public property is managed. Residents should become aware as soon as possible that they, too, are the owners of property handed over to local self-government, and for which they also are fully responsible. But the authorities must prove their management skills in relation to this property. It is a new task that goes beyond the limits of traditional administration. Local authorities, after assuming the property, will be responsible for its management and will make economic decisions accordingly. It is not enough for them to act according to certain bureaucratic procedures. Instead, they must conduct business activity based on market operations. It is a big challenge.

The transferring of formerly state-owned enterprises to local self-governments also constitutes a serious problem. One must choose their new legal form, in accordance with provisions in the Civil Code, and then make the relevant legal and organizational changes. It shall mean not only establishing new services within local offices but also compelling local authorities to solve new types of problems.

The Polish Experience

The transfer of property in Poland progressed smoothly and local authorities immediately acquired the necessary management skills. The decentralized procedure allowed the prompt identification of local self-government property. It was also of great help that the notion of private property in Poland survived during the communist regime and people understood the value of private ownership. But, quite unexpectedly, the transformation of formerly state-owned enterprises into communal units or companies operating on general terms became a serious problem. Strong resistance emerged not only from fear of change but also from the fact that the management of these firms had no experience with market conditions. The process was so slow that it was necessary to adopt very rigorous acts that imposed an obligation to undertake the appropriate transformations.

Another challenge concerns the need to **permanently improve the quality of the administration**, and in particular, to develop the qualifications of administration employees. Most employees are inadequately prepared to perform new tasks. During the previous step of the reform, they were to be trained as soon as possible. But during the consolidation period, the training scheme must be modified. Time is not as great of a pressure as previously. Training sessions may be organized with composure and their programs may be extended in duration. Local authorities cannot conduct trainings themselves, but should establish contacts with specialist organizations. It requires, on the one hand, adequate resources dedicated to that purpose and, on the other hand, the establishment of an employee motivation system aimed at encouraging employees to continuously improve their qualifications. Employees must be aware that it is the only route to career development and promotion.

The implementation and consolidation of transformations in so many areas of life require a huge amount of work to be performed by local authorities. Obviously, they do not have the capacity or skills to solve all the problems by themselves. They need professional assistance. Here, specialized institutions can play an important role.

The Polish Experience

In the Polish reform programs, the issue of assisting organizations emerged. However, due to the pace of transformations, it was impossible to undertake extensive activities before the introduction of the reform. The activities were limited to the creation of two mechanisms. The first one was a network of regional representatives of the government plenipotentiary, which meant establishing an autonomous support network for newly-created local authorities within the government administration. The second was the creation of a social partner with the establishment of the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy. Both these institutions played an important role in the reform implementation process. In response to the needs of local self-governments, other institutions were created over time.

E. Nongovernmental and Professional Organizations

Main tasks:

- 1) To strengthen local democracy and the participation of society in exercising power
- 2) To strengthen local traditions and local values
- 3) To assist local authorities
- 4) To educate the administration's employees

1) Strengthening Local Democracy

Completing the implementation phase of the reform does not necessarily mean that people already understand the notion of local self-government and understand how to participate in the process. Self-governance is a concept that society finds rather difficult to comprehend. People are usually unaware that not only are they allowed to participate in decision-making but this is actually expected of them—that they can decide about their own local matters and the methods of solving these problems. Often, they do not feel responsible for the consequences of the decisions. The idea of self-governance, due to its complicated structure, has always taken shape in people's minds with difficulty.

The Polish Experience

A survey conducted in Poland in 1996, six years after the reform, showed that only half of the respondents were able to specify what the term “territorial local self-government” meant. The remaining half stated that they had never heard of the concept or they were unable to explain its meaning. Respondents confused institutions, procedures, names of groups, and types of social activities. The same term “self-government” was used to describe an institution, its tasks, and people connected with the local authority. Even though a majority of people had some knowledge of the operations of local self-government authorities, unfortunately their information was so limited that they were unable to establish any links between what they have heard about the reform and the actual administrative operations of local self-government.

The decentralization of the state and local self-governance creates the basic conditions for the development of civil society. In order for this to take effect, it is essential to popularize knowledge about them and demonstrate their practical advantages. Finally, the actual participation of society in exercising power is inevitable.

Civil society organizations are charged with the important task of supporting the changes in society’s mentality. Their development must progress in two directions:

- Supporting of local authorities in fulfilling various charitable tasks and providing social care, and
- Gathering together people to accomplish specific goals by establishing goal-oriented organizations

The development of organizations from the above mentioned group is significant to improving the level of services rendered to residents, especially those most in need. On the other hand, the second group is particularly important for the development of local democracy. These organizations are to perform the following tasks:

- Group together people for or against individual administration decisions, for example, on environmental protection
- Cooperate with local authorities when drafting development strategy by, for example, specifying the major needs of society
- Control the process of implementing adopted development strategies by local authorities, creating a “watchdog”

One must always remember that changing the law is easy. It can be done in a few months time. Rebuilding institutions is much more difficult. But the most complicated

and difficult task is changing people's way of thinking and their modes of behavior. This may require a dozen years or even a few generations.

2) Strengthening Local Traditions and Local Values

For local self-government to operate effectively, people must identify with their own city or village and with the community where they live. Strong social bonds must be created, which can then contribute to solving local problems and setting the direction of local development as a cohesive group. People must be willing to work together. Local traditions, which create a feeling of community within local society, can play a particularly crucial role in building these bonds. Searching for these types of bonds and for common interests within society should also be one of the major responsibilities of civil society organizations.

The Polish Experience

After creating local self-government in Poland, particular towns, on a large scale, started organizing various events, referring to local traditions, such as feasts, festivals, competitions and contests, fairs, and reenactments of historical events, among others. All municipalities and towns adopted their own coat of arms, some of them flags, anthems, or bugle-calls, in order to build their own identity and local spirit. The Foundation in Support of Local Democracy established an annual award for the best local programs that built local identity through developing local traditions and culture.

3) Assisting Local Authorities

A mayor is not able to independently solve all the problems that may occur. Therefore, in order to consolidate the changes, local authorities need assistance from civil society organizations, as well as professional organizations.

Based on the experience gained, we present here a very general list of specialists, which local authorities may need; however, in specific cases this list may differ. The following are needed:

- legal advisors
- management advisors
- computer consultants

- economic advisors, including investment advisors
- financial advisors
- physical planners
- real estate managers

The methods of acquiring these specialists may differ according to local conditions. In certain cases particular towns, especially larger ones, may implement their own specialized units. But smaller municipalities are usually unable to do so, as it is too expensive, and associations of self-governments, that can organize specialized consultancy services, may play an important role in filling this gap. However, they can only fulfill that role when they achieve their organizational and financial potential.

The Polish Experience

Local self-government authorities in Poland started to create associations at a very early stage. They established various national and regional associations and goal-oriented unions to implement defined tasks. At the moment there are national unions grouping together regions, districts, cities, metropolises, small towns, and rural municipalities. There are also many local unions and intermunicipal agreements established to fulfill various public tasks. There are also transborder cooperation agreements in place, so-called Euroregions, consisting of municipalities of two or three neighboring countries that border one another.

The other way is to contract specialized consultants. A market economy, produces many consultancy institutions of a commercial character, linking their activities to satisfy recipients' needs. But those services may also be offered by various nongovernmental or professional organizations. Each form mentioned above has its own pros and cons. In every way, however, these supporting institutions should be stable, should ensure a relevant quality of consultancy, and be responsible for the outcomes. They must be flexible, so they can undergo development in compliance with continuously changing needs and create strong expert teams. At the same time, there must be a system in place designed to eliminate unreliable institutions and those that are only interested in gaining fast and easy profits.

4) Educating Cadres

The preparation of administrative cadres is one of the primary tasks for achieving the intended effects. Special, stable and professional institutions are necessary. They can be divided into two separate groups:

- **training institutions** aimed at improving qualifications of current administrative employees
- **schools of public administration and management**, aimed at educating candidates to occupy positions within the administration in the future

The transformation of the existing administration should be accompanied by the establishment of specialist **training institutions**. This is a continual task, as the reform initiates a process of transformation that requires solving new problems as they occur. Training is obviously most needed during the introductory period of the changes. This is also the period when the organization of training seems to be the most difficult because training institutions are either non-existent or still immature.

The psychological attitude of candidates for training is often a barrier. Initially, they may have difficulties specifying their needs or may even be unable to properly fulfill their new tasks. Simply, they do not know how to pose questions and are simply afraid to ask them. Therefore, no pressure exists for the organization of courses or trainings at the beginning of the process. The need arises only when administrative employees are faced with the need to deal with pressing issues and they begin to realize they lack the necessary skills.

The Polish Experience

The Polish experience of this phenomenon is very interesting. The only training organization that was in place during the reform's implementation was the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy, which had been building a network of its own regional centers only at the initial stage. Several conclusions can be drawn from analysis of the trainings. The first year was a period of enormous euphoria and enthusiasm about the upcoming changes. Almost 30,000 people took part in the trainings. All of them wanted to gain more information about the new administration system, and they wanted to acquire entirely new knowledge.

In the following years, there was a decrease in the number of participants by almost half, even though many more courses were offered. Due to the huge amount of responsibilities, administrative officers did not have time to participate in the training sessions.

Belief in their personal capacities and confidence played an important role, too. Only some time later did the employees come to understand what they did not know, and then the number of participants started to grow again. In 1998, the number of participants exceeded 50,000. In the following years, the number of training participants ranged from 50,000 to 80,000. The waves of demand for trainings have also reflected external events, such as Poland's accession to the European Union or the introduction of new legal acts.

The training market gradually expanded. New institutions were created. The Foundation ceased to be a monopoly and its participation in the market decreased below 50 percent. The training market changed when foreign assistance programs came to an end and trainings had to be financed by the participants from their municipal budgets. The situation changed once more when EU structural funds began supporting trainings projects.

Over time, training themes are subject to modifications, mainly because of the changes in the scope of problems that councilors and local self-government employees must solve. In the beginning, the basic problems, including the idea of territorial local self-government or its legal basis, are considered. With time, the problems become more complicated, thus demand increases. When administrative employees and local politicians obtain basic knowledge and grow in sophistication, they demand more thorough information on the specific issues that they are interested in. Now, they already know what they want to ask about.

The fulfillment of such important training tasks requires stable, professional, and responsible institutions. Local authorities will allow their employees to be trained only by trustworthy institutions.

The Polish Experience

Training courses in Poland were offered on topics like conflict resolution, particular laws, modern management methods, computerization of offices, rendering services to clients, public relations, drafting development strategies, economic policy, and real estate management. In the beginning, lectures were the most common form of education. Successively, however, interactive methods gained importance, allowing participants not only to pose questions but also to shape training curricula in the form of workshops. Finally, self-education forums began to develop, for example, discussion platforms, gathering together specialists from particular spheres of the administration. Such platforms make it possible not only to decide on training themes but also to exchange experiences between participants, who now possess more sophisticated knowledge and skills.

Problems related to **schools of public administration** are closely connected with the broader issue of higher education development. However, it cannot be ignored while working on the reform. Changing an administration system and its tasks implies changing the mode of education for future officers. Academic circles are usually quite conservative and tend to apply out-of-date educational methods and curricula. This must be changed. In communist countries, administration faculty was treated as a specialization in legal sciences and the administrative officers' education was based primarily on teaching laws and administrative procedures. Nowadays, a modern local administration officer is not only a lawyer, although of course they must understand the law and know how to use it in practice. These officers must also know about management. They must understand the society in which they are working and must acquire many skills that go beyond the legal sciences. A new educational program for public officials must reflect these changes. By way of example, a city official must know how to use a map and interpret any surveys or plans. This knowledge must be acquired through studies, but academic legal and administration programs typically have not included such a subject in their curricula.

F. Research

Tasks:

- 1) To monitor the decentralization process
- 2) To assist in the development of local self-government authorities

1) Monitoring the Decentralization Process

Research units should actively participate in the monitoring process, resulting in two types of conclusions concerning amendments to currently binding legal acts, in connection with emerging needs, and suggestions for the next stages of the reform.

An institution that can fulfill these two tasks on a continuous basis should be established. The most appropriate form would be a research institution, which in the previous steps of the reform conducted research aimed at the reform's implementation. This institution should record observations and experiences and conduct a thorough analysis of the situation. It should also be a think tank, where new concepts and ideas are born, and be prepared to issue warning signals regarding potential dangers and risks. Each reform constitutes only one step within the process of transforming the state administration. Only after each step is complete, can the next one be planned.

There are various ways of organizing such institutions. They can be created and maintained by an association of local authorities, as a representative of the changes' beneficiary. It could be a university or an independent professional organization. In any case, it should be an institution independent from both the central administration and any political party. The idea is to create an independent observatory capable of conducting analyses, making assessments, and indicating what to eliminate from government programs in advance of any crisis situation that might appear during the development process.

The Polish Experience

No adequate solution for this was adopted in Poland. The unions of local self-governments conducted studies and analyses but it always improvised and the work was fragmentary. A system of self-government analysis was established but not sufficiently developed. Many universities undertook the issue of local self-governance. Many of them created separate research units to deal with this matter. But research and studies have an academic character, which does not contribute to practical improvement in the functioning of local authorities. The only case where research was specifically designed for practical purposes was a study program held in 1995–1997. It resulted in establishing the foundation of local self-government at the regional level.

Transformation is a process that is extended over time. It usually lasts for a very long time or does not have a clear end. States are complex systems that never reach stability but rather always evolve. Therefore, development processes need to be reasonably steered, to avoid rapid changes and crisis situations, which result in losses, often difficult to undo. To steer the process, adequate tools must be created for the purposes of monitoring and influencing the course of action. It is indeed difficult but finding relevant solutions may bring enormous benefits.

2) Assisting Local Authorities

The reform will create new working conditions to which local authorities must adjust. They need assistance, which may be provided by professional organizations, as well as research institutions. Furthermore, the unit responsible for monitoring the transformation process should play a special role. It is essential to maintain the basic direction of the transformation, as previously planned, and not to deviate from the agreed route, when difficulties are encountered.

Another very useful mechanism is collecting and disseminating the best practices. The majority of local authorities face very similar problems. That is why the dissemination of best practices, developed by particular local self-governments, is of great importance. It simply saves time and effort in the search for solutions to the same problems in different locations. Thus, collecting experiences, making assessments, and disseminating them through publications, seminars, and trainings are required. A relevant research unit should undertake this task. Moreover, specialist press and online networks can play a crucial role here.

The Polish Experience

The Foundation in Support of Local Democracy in Poland was the initiator of the creation of regional discussion platforms that gathered together people with similar positions or responsibilities from Polish local authorities. Participants met regularly to hold discussions and took part in meetings with various invited experts. This initiative attracted a lot of interest, and currently there are almost one hundred clubs of this nature. They gather together mayors, chairs of local self-government councils, municipal secretaries, treasurers, assistants to local enterprises, and administrators responsible for natural disaster management, health, education, and cultural services, planning, environmental protection, social care, European integration, legal advisors, auditors, and people cooperating with NGOs.

PART THREE

Assisting the Reform

Assisting the Reform

International assistance makes any success much easier. The opportunity to learn from other countries' experiences is an invaluable resource when undertaking such a complex task.

The development of local self-governance is a core factor in the development of democracy and political stability in any country. These same reforms also have an international dimension as they contribute to the formation of an international order that is based on stable and democratic states. International assistance fulfills this role, if it is properly directed and organized and based on the mutual trust of donors and receiving countries.

Tenets of international assistance:

- 1) Provide assistance to not only share knowledge but to also enact change.
- 2) Respect the specificity of each country.
- 3) Directly assist overcoming existing hurdles.
- 4) Create a flexible plan that can evolve to accommodate arising needs.
- 5) Travel abroad for valuable and helpful insight.
- 6) Develop local institutions. International aid is only temporary.
- 7) Design assistance so it can be easily absorbed by the beneficiary.

- 1) **The aim of international assistance is to not only share knowledge but to also enact change. The organizers of international assistance share responsibility for the reform's success.**

The relationship between donors and recipients needs to be built upon mutual interests. The assistance programs should be understood as a joint effort between two equal partners who respect each other and have complete trust in one another. Donor countries impart knowledge and share their experiences, which entails a substantial cost burden. It is important to acknowledge their efforts and good will. But the goal of those efforts is to bring about the desired change. If this goal is not achieved, all efforts and money will be wasted.

Nevertheless, a country can be rebuilt only by its own society. Only local experts will really know the circumstances, traditions, customs, and skills of the inhabitants. Each local self-government is formed from its immediate local society and reflects its specific needs and abilities. Foreign experts cannot completely possess this knowledge. Their role should be that of an advisor and not as a leader. In collaboration with local experts, their knowledge and authority should be taken advantage of in order to plan for the reform's proper course of action.

The conveying of knowledge and experiences is a tool, not the final goal. This information and the manner in which it is imparted must be tailored to the circumstances in which they will be utilized. Foreign experts must know how to present their knowledge in such a way as to be most easily absorbed by the recipients. They have to learn the needs and mentality of local people. This requires a lot of work.

The Polish Experience

At the beginning of the 1990s, many foreign experts visited Poland eager to offer advice and assistance. Much of their knowledge was very useful. But also there were many who did not understand our specific problems. Unfortunately, many of their lectures ended with half of the audience walking out. These lectures were of two varieties: some were too general, while others too specific. In the first case, obvious sweeping generalizations were made about the great value of democracy, freedom, and the brotherhood of countries. In the second, specialists lectured, for example, on the method of collecting taxes in a specific region of their particular country. This was interesting from an academic standpoint but completely useless for practitioners. With time, these incidences occurred less frequently because the experts devoted a lot of time to understanding the Polish context. They adapted their presentations to directly relate to the problems that Polish public officials were trying to solve. Nevertheless, I still encounter experts who teach what they know well and what is comfortable for them but is not what their recipients need. What recipients need is more complex and requires more preparation to teach.

2) Respect the specificity of each country.

Every country has their own specificity and assistance programs must be created with this in mind. This tenet is not always observed. Donors regularly design assistance programs. Regardless of the agreement between donors and recipients, the deciding voice is always the donor and the recipient tends to accept everything and anything because even the least significant contribution will somehow be useful. Assistance programs should be the result of dialogue between both sides.

It is not good if the donor designs a plan that is based only on experiences from their own country and assumes the same problems exist in the recipient country. These programs could, in fact, be avoiding the actual problems. Basing programs entirely on foreign experiences can bring about the desired effect only when the domestic circumstances are appropriately similar. When domestic circumstances differ considerably, the transferring of experiences could result in a negative outcome, which will challenge the trust needed to implement change.

The realization of an assistance program is a collaboration and should not be viewed as an exercise in authority. Assuming the roles of the mentor and the bright pupil would ruin the point of the program. Donors must understand all of the particular problems and existing hardships that the recipient country must overcome. There is a real risk of worsening any problems. Recipient countries are in a weaker position and the donor country is showing them how to fix this. It is a delicate situation.

I am reminded of a conference organized by USAID in Bucharest at which a very interesting and comprehensive publication, prepared by American experts, was presented. It compared the good practices in post-communist countries. When I went up to congratulate the authors, I told them that I already felt offended when I read the introduction. They had written that the fundamental problem in post-communist countries was a lack of democratic experience and for that reason they should follow the steps presented by the American experts and then they would achieve success. How simple it seems for those who do not want to understand the actual problems of those who they would like to help!

I encountered another example of arrogance by international experts when a government offered us help and directed us to a group of specialists. The specialists, however, disregarded the list of our needs, prepared by experts, and they decided to do the needs assessment alone. They spent many months traveling around the country and they were very surprised to see that local people were unable to specify what they needed. At that time their knowledge and experiences were too limited.

If you want to help others, you need to properly prepare by analyzing and generalizing their experiences. It is not enough to come from a country where institutions already exist and go to another country where those institutions are to be established. You must be able to say how they can be established, but under completely different circumstances. This is not easy.

3) Direct assistance to overcome existing hurdles.

The assistance program should be based on an analysis of the actual barriers hindering the reform's progress. For the success of the reform, it is critical that the following four factors occur simultaneously (see Part One):

- Political will
- Expert knowledge
- Social support for the intended reform
- Adequate human resources, capable of realizing the reform

Each of these factors evolves in a different way and encounters different barriers. For this reason, one of the fundamental domestic tasks is assessing the state of each of these fields and supporting their development in such a way so that all four factors appear simultaneously in an appropriate dimension. This requires the observation of the decentralization process as a complex and dynamic political, social, and economic phenomenon. It is also important to identify difficulties that may arise.

Table 1.
Four Factors Essential to Reform

Shortage	Receipient of Help	Form of Help
Political Will	Political leaders, parliamentarians, members of government	Seminars, conferences, analysis, memoranda, short educational visits abroad
Knowledge and Experience	Research institute, experts, professional organizations, local organizations	Equipping research institutes, lengthy internships abroad, professional workshops, delegating foreign experts to collaborate on-site
Social Support	Nongovernmental organizations	Help in organizing public campaigns, organizing systems of social communication, aiding NGOs, training local leaders, short trips abroad
Human Resources	Local authorities and professional organizations	Organizing large-scale trainings, capacity building of professional organizations, advising administrative schools, organizing trips abroad of a moderate duration

4) Create a flexible plan that can evolve to accommodate arising needs.

Programs must be tailored to the reform's process. The tasks that need to be completed in each phase of the reform will differ. In addition, the essence of how the assistance is transferred should be different. This is especially crucial in relation to local authorities. At the beginning, the representatives of these fields need to be convinced of the need for reform. However, in later phases, they will require specialized assistance to solve specific problems. It is therefore imperative to have a continuous evolution of the assistance's form, scope, and content because the reform will take on the speed of a galloping horse.

The Polish Experience

In the middle of 1990, shortly after local elections, a representative from an American university visited me and offered his help. I proposed that he help the municipalities in creating their charters, which were essential in propelling local administrations into action. He enthusiastically agreed. He returned to me several months later. He entered my office with a triumphant look on his face. He stated that he had taken care of everything. I asked him what he was referring to, as I did not remember exactly what we had previously discussed. He answered with slight note of reproach that it was about the charters. He had organized the financing, shortly he would choose the proper experts, and in the following academic year, he would be ready to begin work. I thanked him but explained that the municipalities created their charters some time ago. They created them within several weeks as best they could because without them they would be unable to function. The American was baffled that, during the course of the reform, issues needed to be solved the moment they arose. Priorities change at every moment. The passage of time is unrelenting.

The elasticity of the assistance program is an extremely important issue. Working on a program over the course of several years has its advantages. The program's content will be properly organized and prepared. However, unexpected problems will always arise, which change the original priorities and needs. In these situations, the assistance's organization should allow for quick changes to be made to the program, in order to adequately support the needs of the recipient.

The Polish Experience

In Poland in 1999, as a result of the establishment of district and voivodship self-governments, new problems arose that required foreign experts' help. However, international assistance programs were already established, in agreement with the previous government, which had not foreseen the reform. Donors insisted on offering help only under the previously established guidelines, completely ignoring the fact that this subject was marginally important at the moment. Of course, the Polish state took the help under these limitations, as something is always better than nothing. This is admittedly how local self-government was aided, skipping over the most important issues for Poland at the time.

5) Travel abroad for valuable and helpful insight.

Internships abroad can have enormous significance in training and education, in addition to offering examples of how change is enacted. However, these trips must be sufficiently prepared in order to achieve this. It is important to outline in each instance, what exactly is the trip's purpose. There are three general types of visits:

- Short visits for the purpose of general observation of local self-governments and possibilities of establishing them
 - Educational visits for the purpose of learning about a specific issue
 - Specialized internships for academic development
-
- *Short Visits: 7–10 days*

Purpose: Encouraging self-governance.

International assistance cannot be treated only as a technical problem that requires the teaching of skills. The help also needs to have a psychological component. Faith in its success is a condition for the reform's execution. Nevertheless, everyone experiences uncertainty during the course of the reform. People will always question if the proper path was chosen and if their intention will be fulfilled. People who never had the chance to see another country will feel especially unsure. The lack of knowledge heightens fear. To obtain success, one must be sure of their rectitude.

For this reason, in the first phase of the reform, it is imperative to have not only intellectual but also psychological support. This cannot be gained only through lectures. People attend lectures by foreign experts with great hesitation. They do not always believe, or understand, everything that is said. Nothing will convince a leader more to undertake a reform than seeing that it is possible in other countries. Even the best lectures will not substitute for the practical knowledge that is attained by looking at reality, from the organization of a bureau to what the mayor has on his or her desk.

The purpose of short training visits abroad is not to acquire concrete knowledge but to show another method of working and that this method is not that difficult, in fact. These kinds of trips should be organized earlier for local leaders and later for local politicians and agency workers.

The Polish Experience

The organization of a short training program in France for hundreds of local leaders was a massive help to the reform in Poland. It took place before the implementation of the reform. In addition to creating a good social climate for the reform, it showed a large amount of people that rebuilding local self-government is not only necessary but also possible.

In order for the reform to be realized, political support is essential. The politicians who will be making decisions and taking responsibility for the reform ought to be convinced of the need for reform. Often they are full of fear and anxiety. Their inexperience and lack of understanding of the essence of self-governance prevents them from forming their own individual opinions. No one can be sure that the correct choice was made or that the reform will bring the desired results. Local trainings and programs are usually not enough to convince politicians. They need the opinion of international experts. This can be obtained through a short trip abroad that has been properly planned and directed.

The Polish Experience

Polish experts visited the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in 1990 and gained the opportunity to obtain the opinion and support of the most authoritative assembly in Europe. Support for the reform's proposition from outside authorities allowed the reform to gain political acceptance back home.

- *Professional Visits: 2–3 months*

Purpose: Becoming familiar with a particular problem that specialists in the home country need to solve.

The reform requires the implementation of specific changes in a variety of fields. In order for them to be properly prepared and executed, the knowledge of specialists is required. The specialists should be people employed by local authorities or nongovernmental and professional organizations. In order to obtain this knowledge, specialists should spend time at the appropriate institutions abroad.

Organizers frequently think that one hour spent visiting an agency and listening to a lecture will impart the necessary knowledge in a given field. This is a misunderstanding. It is an illusion that knowledge can be increased after the influence of just several days. To learn new skills, a trip of longer duration should be planned, whose itinerary is carefully guided and prepared.

The topic of these visits should be tailored to the tasks the participants need to execute. The subject needs to relate to issues of the reform that require practical work to solve. The participants should be the people who will be actually solving these problems.

The effectiveness of these types of visits increases substantially if they are connected with trainings undertaken earlier in the home country and if the participants are well prepared for a trip abroad. They need to know what they want to learn and how they will utilize what they learn once they return home. Professional visits should be reserved for those people who will be able to use what they learn and who are aware that they will be the people solving the tasks upon their return.

- *Research Internships: 3–9 months*

Purpose: The education or development of qualifications of independent experts.

Educational and research internships are not directly related to realizing the reform. Their duration prevents the knowledge acquired during the internships from being used immediately during the initial steps of the reform. But their role has great significance for the development of highly-qualified specialists, who will be invaluable for the transformation of the country and the organization of schools of public administration.

6) Develop local institutions. International aid is only temporary.

All international assistance is temporary and at a certain moment it will come to an end. One cannot predict when this will occur. It can result from the end of the transformation process or from completely independent events that cause sponsors to withdraw their support from a given country as international attention is focused on another region. It can happen that a given country will suddenly be left to its own resources. For this reason, one of the primary tasks of international assistance should be the development of local institutions that will be able to assume the task of supporting new local self-government.

The Polish Experience

Occasionally, one may encounter a shortsighted attitude that focuses on the present as the only period of importance and “what will be in the future” is of little or no consequence. An extensive assistance program regarding the organization of Polish institutions, sponsored by the United States, was run in such a fashion in Poland. When the program finished, the organizers refused to relay information to the consortium of Polish organizations that wanted to continue supporting local authorities. The benefit of the program was to a large degree wasted and a loss for each side. After a year, nobody remembered that the Americans had helped and that great amounts of financial resources were spent, whereas the local continuation of the program would have cemented society’s positive opinion about the help.

Aid programs should support the development of education and assistance services. National organizations should take full part in the realization of these kinds of programs and should be utilized as subcontractors. They should relay international educational content in such a way that will be understandable for local populations. Social partners also require support and financial resources should be set aside for their capacity building. Some assistance programs deny support to nongovernmental and professional organizations that they perceive to be commercial organizations.

Above all else, foreign experts should concentrate on educating local trainers and consultants on how to develop the proper methods to support local self-government and create the appropriate supporting institutions, in order for them to be capable of working independently when the international assistance comes to an end. Unfortunately, this advice is not widely applied. Program organizers often create their own model of content to disseminate and then directly organize the education of local employees with local authorities. This system of organization is easier and it better suits assessment criteria. Donors prefer outputs that can be easily tallied and uniformly assessed, such as the number of people receiving help, how many municipalities took part in assistance programs, or how many people have been trained. However, this does not evaluate the actual influence that international assistance had in developing a given country. One can count the number of participants in a training, but one cannot define how much the training helped in developing a state. Yet this is precisely the goal of international assistance.

This model of directly supporting local authorities often has a negative influence on existing professional and nongovernmental organizations. The result is that specialists are accepted to international institutions that offer substantially higher salaries than local organizations. This weakens those organizations that, in future, will have to assume the task of supporting local authorities when the assistance programs come to a close.

Only the authorities and society of a given country can execute reforms and transformations. Assistance programs can support them but not replace them. Assistance programs are there to strengthen local institutions, in order for them to be independent, from the moment international aid stops. However, sometimes conflicts of interest and priorities occur between the organizations initiating the programs and the programs' participants. What is convenient for one side is not always practical for the other. Program organizers have their own interests, which can become very specific, especially when the programs' executors are enterprises looking to profit. Compromises are essential, even though they carry the risk of modifying the original goals.

The Polish Experience

An important assistance program in Poland was run by a company that intended to be an active participant in the market after the program was finished. It treated all Polish organizations working in this market as future competitors that should not be helped and whose development should be limited. Fortunately, the company did not succeed but the damage was done, having poached local experts from national institutions and thus weakened them.

7) Design assistance so that it can be easily absorbed by the beneficiary.

Aid should be designed and realized so that the beneficiary can easily take advantage of it. Based on this principle, several practical postulates result.

International collaboration can develop only when there exists, for all partners, the legal, institutional, social, or cultural points of reference. The closer the collaboration is, the more common points of reference there should be. Partners must share a common ground. This is applicable to international assistance as well. It will be useful only when there exists a common understanding between representatives of both sides. Words must signify the same thing. Mutual understanding and collaboration is not possible when partners possess different understandings.

The Polish Experience

A good illustrative example of this problem is the seminar organized by American institutions in 1990 in Moscow, when the USSR still existed. The purpose of the meeting was to present the principles and benefits of a democratic system to Soviet mayors. I was only one representative of a post-communist country. Together, with a mayor from North Dakota and a member from the British House of Lords, we were to present a model of local democratic initiatives. The discussion became absurd when everyone used the same words but each assigned their own meaning to them. From the discussion, it seemed that Soviet municipalities only differed from British and American municipalities by the number of councilors. In reality, the role of a mayor in the Soviet Union or America encompassed entirely different duties and institutions, even though the same word were used to describe them. I would liken it to a telephone conversation between an Eskimo and an African. One says, "Today, we're having a really warm and sunny day." The other responds, "We are also having a really warm and sunny day." They use the same words for situations that differ by 50 degrees Celsius!

Difficulties in understanding may arise even when using a translator. Everyone uses their own professional language, in which words are used that do not exist in the dictionary or words are given their own special meaning that deviates from what is generally accepted. It is important to pay attention to this. The same words can mean something completely different. It is not easy to avoid these kinds of difficulties. Occasionally, it is imperative to define the actual meaning, which cannot be relayed through specific terms.

Here is one example of how translation can create misunderstanding: A group of UN experts organized proceedings on joint urban planning programs in three languages: English, Russian, and French. It proposed to organize international comparative studies on three levels: the metropolitan area, the city, and the neighborhood. It was regarding this last term that a crisis arose. English experts used the term "neighborhood unit," in accordance with accepted terminology. The translator did not know this term and thought that it was referring to units neighboring the city and so started to translate it to Russian as "*prigorodnaja zona*" or suburban zone. The ensuing dialogue was absurd because each side did not fully understand the other and everyone decided that the other sides did not know what they were talking about. Examples such as this one abound.

During this first phase, representatives of newly-established institutions are unable to take advantage of foreign assistance as well as unable to define their actual needs. It is during the reform's implementation that the largest amount of help that is offered happens to coincide with a lack of practical knowledge on the local level. When this knowledge increases and people are capable of formulating their needs, foreign assistance

gradually decreases. For this reason, it is important to teach beneficiaries as quickly as possible how to choose consultants, how to ask questions, and how to make use of their answers. How to utilize foreign assistance should be one of the first topics for training recipients and local organizations. A system of appropriate contacts should be developed and possibly even new institutions should be created for this purpose.

Many small problems emerge that will seriously hamper taking advantage of foreign assistance. For example, many countries follow the principle that recipients must assume some financial responsibility for the program. The principle is valid because of the idea that we must always make some effort in order to gain something. In practice though, this principle is absurd at the moment of the reform's implementation. Many recipients are not yet associated with institutions and have no income of their own. What results is the offering of help and the need for help, but no opportunity to link the two.

Foreign assistance is an invaluable source of information and skills and is one of the essential factors in realizing the reform. Its worth cannot be overestimated. At the same time though, its organization and direction decides its effectiveness and applicability. How these programs are run will determine what impression the organizers leave in peoples' minds and collective memory.

A Conclusion

A strong local self-government is an essential element of any democratic state. Every state that transforms from a totalitarian regime to a democratic government must rebuild their local and regional self-government. Although this is a difficult road, it produces many great results. The better the reforms are executed, the better and speedier the results.

Reforms are difficult and require assertive actions from political and administrative leaders as well as the engagement of several thousand people who want to reform their country. Political, legislative, and organizational actions must be connected with the development of social support. This is very difficult but possible, and people need to be encouraged along the way. Everyone should believe that reforms are possible and that they will bear great fruit. One just has to want to undertake them.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Calendar of Polish Reforms

In August of 1980, waves of strikes forced the Communist Party and the government to recognize the Solidarity Worker's Union organized by Lech Wałęsa. Unfortunately, this trade union was made illegal in 1981 and martial law was imposed to attempt to stabilize the political system. During the short period of 1980–1981, when pressure from the communist government subsided, public discussions regarding the need for reforms in the state took place. In June 1981, at the semi-legal opposition forum, Jerzy Reguński (the author of this report) presented a memorandum on restoring local self-government. A semi-legal group was established to research local democracy and the reforms required; the group was active for the following years. Contacts with colleagues in many countries, who eagerly shared their experiences, were taken advantage of. These studies led to the formulation of the reform's program.

In December of 1988, Lech Wałęsa founded the Citizens' Committee as a representative of the democratic opposition. Within the framework of the Committee, the Local Government Commission was founded and led by Jerzy Reguński. During the winter of 1989, the Round Table Talks took place between the communist government and the democratic opposition. The rebuilding of local government was discussed in a separate group created within the framework of the talks. Negotiations did not lead to a reconciliation of differences and the only document signed was a protocol regarding this divergence of positions.

Partially free parliamentary elections took place on June 4, 1989, and the opposition won a majority of seats in the Senate. The Local Government Commission under the chairmanship of Jerzy Reguński was established to prepare the reform proposals. On July 29, 1989, the Senate accepted the reform program based on many years of research and adopted a resolution on taking a legislative initiative, in this way beginning the legislative process. In September of that year the first democratic government was formed in post-communist Poland and the Council of Ministers established an Office of a Minister in Charge of Local Government Reform, to which Jerzy Reguński was appointed.

In March of 1990, new laws regarding local government, written by the Senate Commission chaired by Jerzy Stepień, were approved. On May 27, 1990, the first fully free democratic elections took place and new legislation for local municipal government went into effect. On this day local authorities came into power and began reorganizing agencies, creating their own administrations, and assumed responsibility for some state property.

In 1992, the cabinet of Hanna Suchocka began the process of instituting administrative districts, which did not exist, as units of local self-government. Michał Kulesza was appointed government plenipotentiary. However, after the early parliamentary elections of 1993, the newly elected leftist government blocked the reform.

In 1997, after the right-wing party won the elections, the central government's attitude to the decentralization changed. In May of 1998, the appropriate legal acts were adopted by Parliament on two higher levels of local self-government: districts (powiat) and regions (województwo) were established. Simultaneously, the administrative subdivision of the country was changed. In September, elections took place on all three levels of local and regional self-government. On January 1, 1999, a new system of local and regional authorities took effect.

The next crucial change occurred in 2002, when the direct election of mayors was introduced, and the mayors assumed, at the same time, full executive powers in their municipalities.

In 2008, the government initiated further reforms that aimed to strengthen local government and expand its responsibilities, which had eroded over the last few years. These reforms also sought to limit the ability of the central administration to insert itself into the domains under local government's jurisdiction.

Appendix 2

The Foundation in Support of Local Democracy

The Foundation in Support of Local Democracy was founded in 1989, with the goal of supporting administrative reforms and self-governance of local communities. Presently, it is the largest nongovernmental organization in Poland that supports local government, nongovernmental organizations, and municipal and regional administration.

The Foundation created a countrywide organization that connected sixteen regional support centers, four schools of public administration in Bialystok, Kielce, Lodz, and Szczecin, and a research center. In two decades, over one million people have participated in its training and educational events.

More recently, the Foundation has organized assistance programs in the Balkans, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, and Central Asia. It has shared Poland's experiences of reforming local government, building local democracy and local NGOs, preparing for European integration, and supporting local enterprises.

Within the framework of the Foundation's network, the Polish Institute of Local Democracy exists as a center of analysis and research. Its purpose is the gathering of experiences and preparing and disseminating papers on crucial issues in building self-governance and civic society. It publishes studies on the history of self-governmental reforms in Poland and series of reports on the fundamental problems in the development of local government.

For its work, the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy was awarded the UN Habitat Scroll of Honour in 1995, the "Pro Publico Bono" High Prize bestowed by the prime minister in 2000, and the Economics Forum Honorary Award in 2004 for supporting collaboration in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as numerous distinctions from regional and local authorities.

<http://www.frdl.org.pl>

About the Author

Jerzy Regulski (b. 1924)

Professor of Urban Planning and Economics

Doctor *honoris causa* Roskilde University Centre, Denmark (1993) and University of Łódź, Poland (1996)

Honorary citizen of the city of Jelenia Gora and the municipalities of Marklowice and Podkowa Lesna

President, Foundation in Support of Local Democracy

Professor at the Colleges of Public Administration in Białystok and in Szczecin

Awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta and distinguished with numerous national and international honors

Political Prisoner 1945–46

Initiator of research on rebuilding of local self-government (1981–88)

Member of the Citizens' Committee with Lech Wałęsa (1988–90)

Chief “Solidarity” Negotiator of the Local Government Reform during the Polish “Round Table” Talks between the communist government and the democratic opposition (1989)

Senator (1989–1991)

Minister in charge of Local Government Reform (1989–1991)

Polish Ambassador to the Council of Europe and chairman of the Ambassadors' Working Group for Environment and Local Governments (1992–1997)

Chairman of the Advisory Council to the Prime Minister for the Reforms of the State (1998–1999)

Member of the National Council for European Integration (2000–2004)

Guest Lecturer at many foreign universities

Expert for the World Bank and many other international organizations

Participated in local government reforms in many countries throughout Southern and Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Author of many publications, including the following books:

- *Reforming the State: My Experiences*, Warsaw 2007
- *Self-Governing Poland*, Warsaw 2005
- *Local Government Reform in Poland: An Insider's Story*, Budapest 2003
- *Local Government of 3rd (Polish) Republic: Its Conception and Realization*, Warsaw 2000
- *Five Years in the Council of Europe*, Warsaw 1998
- *Local Government and Decentralization: A Danish–Polish Comparative Study in Political Systems*; (co-editor) Łódź-Roskilde 1988
- *Urban Planning*, Warsaw 1986
- *City Economics*, Warsaw 1982
- With M. Kulesza *The Way to the Local Governance. From initial ideas to the Senate's legal initiative (1981–89)*, Warsaw 2009

Index of Terms

A

academic 21, 26, 39, 107–108, 114, 117–118
acceptance 15, 63, 94, 97, 119
act 46, 49, 81, 92
action 3, 21–23, 25, 37, 43, 56, 71, 74, 82, 108, 114, 117, 125
advisors 103–104, 109, 114
aid 3, 113, 115–117, 120–122
amendment 48–49, 91–92, 98, 107
America 115, 117, 121, 123
analysis vi, 7–9, 23, 26, 37, 39, 45, 48, 69–70, 105, 107–108, 115–116, 129
anti-corruption 97
approval 15, 31, 33, 41
assets 6, 8–9, 12–13, 16–18, 50
assistance v, 39–40, 57, 59, 65, 73, 76–77, 80, 83, 85, 94, 99–100, 103, 106, 108, 113–118, 120–124, 129
assisting institutions 93–94
associations 5, 57, 60, 66, 104, 108
attitude 14, 21, 36, 46–47, 64, 66, 70, 73, 94, 97, 105, 121, 128
audience 65, 114
autonomy 6, 8, 22, 51–52, 64, 80–81, 94, 98, 101

B

beneficiary/beneficiate 108, 113, 122, 124
benefits 20–21, 66, 97, 108, 121, 123
best practices 109
bonds 103
boundaries 81

boycott 15
budget 6–8, 11, 13, 66, 106
bureaucracy 75, 89

C

cadastre 82
career 53, 95, 100
center 35, 39, 52, 65–66, 68–69, 73, 75, 77, 80, 85, 105, 129
circumstances 14, 23–24, 35–36, 44, 60, 69–71, 83–84, 88–89, 91, 94–95, 98, 114–115
citizens 3–6, 10, 12–13, 17, 20–21, 37, 42, 62, 64, 96, 127, 131
citizens' committee 17, 62, 64, 127, 131
city 62, 66, 81, 84, 103, 197, 123, 131
civic organizations 66, 97
Civil Code 99
collapse 25, 39, 42
committee 17, 62–64, 127, 131
common good 46
communal 81, 100
communalization 13, 51
communist (party) 15, 36, 38–39, 43, 81, 96, 100, 107, 127
community 3, 5, 9, 12–13, 17, 32, 43, 52, 61–62, 65, 79–80, 83, 85, 96–97, 103, 129
compendium 84
competence 5, 43, 48–50, 54–56, 74–76, 78–80, 90, 99
computerization 98, 106
conceptualization 31, 33, 35, 39
conduct 4, 90

confidence 55–56, 63–64, 83–88, 96–98, 106
conflict 14, 16–18, 25, 37, 45, 66, 77, 83, 90, 106, 122
consequences 14, 16, 20–31, 45, 65, 89–90, 92–93, 98, 101, 121
conservative 14, 16, 44, 48, 107
consolidation 31, 33, 42, 87–89, 92, 100
consultation 47–48, 55
control 6–9, 11, 16–17, 19, 50, 59, 66, 76–78, 80–81, 94, 98, 102
coordinate 25–26, 35
correction 74, 91, 93
corruption 93–94, 97–98
cost 37, 57, 66, 81, 113
council 5, 7, 50, 56, 66, 90, 109, 127, 131
Council of Europe 3–4, 119, 131–132
Council of Ministers 56, 127
councilors 66, 84, 96, 106, 123
court 52, 77
culture 10, 69, 103
curricula 85, 106–107
Czech Republic 12

D

dangers 45, 90, 107
decentralization 3–4, 6–14, 16–23, 33, 38, 42–43, 46, 48, 51, 55, 61, 65, 68, 74–76, 78, 80, 84, 89–90, 93, 97–99, 102, 107, 116, 128, 132
decision 3, 11, 12, 17, 19, 26, 31–32, 35, 39, 41, 43, 51–52, 58, 60, 63, 67–68, 70–71, 73, 77–78, 82, 85, 94–99, 101–102, 119
delegate 6, 116
demagogy 25
demand 4, 11, 15, 18, 43, 66, 77, 106
design 14, 31, 33, 41–42, 49, 53, 55, 58, 66–67, 113–115, 122
director(s) 19

disputes 18, 31, 41, 49–51, 75, 77–78
district 50, 79, 104, 117, 128
division 7, 12, 17, 48–49, 51, 54, 57–59, 76, 128
doctors 19, 63, 76
donor 113–115, 117, 121
draft 31, 39–40, 47–48, 53, 55, 75, 77, 80, 92–93

E

economy v, 8, 13, 36, 54, 80, 87, 98, 104
education 7, 16–17, 27, 39, 48, 57, 62, 85, 94, 97, 106–107, 109, 118, 120–121
effectiveness 10, 23, 46, 66–67, 95, 120, 124
efficiency 20, 66, 98
elites 22
employees 6, 19, 27, 40, 48, 53, 56, 58, 66, 95–96, 100–101, 105–106, 121
employment 9, 20, 27, 53, 80
enfranchisement 51–52, 81
enterprises 6, 11, 13, 17–19, 52, 58, 66, 76–81, 84, 87, 98–100, 109, 122, 129
Equalization Fund 18
EU 106

EU structural funds 106
European Charter of Local Self-government 4–5
Euroregion 104
evolution 4, 24–25, 38, 87, 89–91, 116
exemption(s) 51
expert 21, 25, 40, 43, 48, 51, 65, 70, 77, 104, 109, 114–123, 132

F

failure 48, 74, 88, 93
fear 4, 15, 63, 100, 118–119
feedback 97
finance 6–8, 18–19, 48, 98, 106
“five minutes” 15, 21, 23–24

flexibility, flexible 45, 66, 104, 113, 116

foundation v, 3–4

Foundation in Support of Local Democracy 47,
62, 65, 67, 101, 103, 105–106, 108–109,
129, 131

forum 65, 106, 127, 129

France 12, 62, 73, 119

freedom 7, 9, 27, 63, 93, 114

fundamental 3, 6, 14, 20, 26, 45, 49, 51, 55, 73,
115–116, 129

G

gaps 67, 70, 94, 104

Germany 12

governing group 35, 41, 45

government plenipotentiary 48, 56–57, 101, 128

guidelines v, 23, 64, 117

H

half reforms 88

healthcare 48, 63, 77

human resources 21, 26, 116

hurdle(s) 113, 115

I

implementation 13–14, 20–21, 24–27, 31, 33,
35, 37–39, 41–42, 44–49, 53–58, 60–61,
64, 66, 68–70, 73–75, 77–79, 84–85,
87–89, 100–101, 105, 107, 119, 123–124

improvement 10, 21, 37, 97, 108

independence 5, 9, 11, 13, 19, 59, 95

information 40, 60–61, 65, 68, 77, 83–84, 102,
105–106, 114, 121, 124

interests 4–5, 8, 11, 15–18, 20, 22, 25, 38,
45–46, 56, 63, 65, 77, 83, 85, 93, 95,
103–106, 109, 113–115, 122

intermunicipal agreements/cooperation 76, 81,
104

international aid 113, 120, 122

international assistance 113, 117–118, 120–122

internship 116, 118, 120

investment 99, 104

Italy 11

J

jurisdiction 27, 97, 128

K

knowledge 21, 25, 32, 38, 40, 42–44, 61, 67–68,
70–71, 83–85, 96–99, 102, 105–107,
113–116, 118–120, 123

Krakow 52, 84

L

land 6, 18, 26, 48, 81, 99

law 5–6, 15, 27, 36, 48–49, 51–52, 54, 74–75,
77–78, 80, 85, 92, 95, 98, 102, 106–107,
127–128

lawyers 77, 107

Lech Walesa 17, 127, 131

lecture 84, 106, 114, 118, 120

legislation 4, 15, 26, 32–33, 47–48, 74, 91, 94,
128

M

majority 15, 18, 22, 36, 38, 45, 48, 50–51, 59,
102, 109, 127

management 5–7, 9–12, 20, 39, 49–52, 55, 80,
82, 87, 90, 95, 98–100, 103, 106–107, 109

map 24, 45, 107

market 13, 98–100, 104, 106, 122

marriage certification 74

martial law 36, 127

mayor 19, 74, 82, 90, 103, 109, 118, 123, 128

mechanism 8–9, 20, 22, 26, 53, 61, 89, 97–98,
101, 109

media 65

minister 19, 36, 52, 55–56, 75–76, 92, 127, 131

ministry 19, 26, 48, 55–56, 76, 92
 Ministry of Defense 26
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs 26
 Ministry of Health 76
 Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration 56
 model 12–13, 23–24, 31, 39, 48, 56, 60, 66, 69, 71, 90, 121, 123
 modification 37, 56, 70–71, 73, 80, 106
 monitoring 31, 73, 91–93, 107–108
 monopoly 6, 13, 106
 motivation 15, 100
 municipality 6, 8, 11–13, 18–19, 21, 26, 42–43, 52, 57, 60, 62, 76, 79, 81–82, 88, 90, 99, 103–104, 117, 121, 123, 128, 131

N

name 5–6, 19, 44, 60, 78, 91, 102
 National Federation of Allotment Gardeners 18
 needs assessment 115
 negotiate 16, 19–20, 63
 negotiation(s) 19, 78, 94, 127
 network 56, 58, 64–66, 81, 92, 101, 105, 109, 129
 NGO or nongovernmental organization 17, 25–26, 32–33, 40, 47, 57, 60, 62, 66, 73, 78, 82–82, 87, 94, 96–97, 101 104, 109, 116, 119, 121, 129

O

objection 43, 46, 65, 70
 objectives 24, 41–42, 48–50, 62, 90, 99
 observatory 108
 obstacles 12, 26, 42, 70
 office(s) 26, 48, 55–58, 63, 74–80, 84, 92, 94, 98–99, 105–107, 117, 127
 officials 10, 27, 53, 58, 63, 66, 84–85, 95, 97–99, 107, 114
 openness 98

operation 8, 21, 26, 49–52, 59, 65, 73, 78, 80–81, 91–92, 95, 99, 102
 opponents 10, 20, 23–25, 37, 43, 45, 51, 55, 63–65, 70, 83, 88
 opportunity(ies) 3, 10, 13, 19, 22, 24, 43–44, 53, 63, 68, 84, 95, 97–98, 113, 119, 124
 opposition 14–15, 17, 19–20, 36, 38, 43, 45, 48, 69, 83, 127, 131
 outputs 121
 ownership 19, 56, 81–82, 99–100

P

parents 17
 parliament 21, 32, 36, 39, 44–45, 47–48, 53, 55, 59, 74–75, 77, 91, 116, 127–128
 participants 3, 25, 32–33, 35, 40–42, 62, 64, 66–67, 73, 84, 87, 105, 106, 109, 120–122
 partner(s) 19, 46–47, 57, 59–60, 62–66, 97, 101, 113, 121–122
 physical planning 99
 plan 15, 20–21, 24, 26, 44, 57, 64, 70–71, 74, 97, 107, 113–116
 policy 8, 26, 99, 106
 political will 20, 25, 31, 35–37, 64, 116
 politician(s) 4, 19–20, 22, 31–32, 35–38, 40–41, 46, 58, 63–64, 66–68, 70–71, 73, 84–85, 89, 91, 106, 118–119
 politics 3, 32–33, 35, 41, 73, 89, 97
 post-communist v, 43, 51, 63, 68, 97, 115, 123, 127
 power 3–6, 9, 11, 16–17, 19, 22, 25–26, 33, 37–38, 42, 44–45, 50, 54, 59, 62–63, 77, 79, 89–90, 101–102, 128
 practice 54, 66–67, 74–75, 94, 97–98, 107, 109, 115, 124
 preparation 22, 26–27, 47, 60, 71, 82–83, 85, 105, 114
 press 65, 87, 109
 prize 129

procedures v, 44, 47, 50–51, 54, 77–78, 80, 82, 98–100, 102, 107

professionalization 93, 95, 98

property 6, 8, 50–52, 54, 58, 62, 73, 75–76, 78, 80–82, 87, 94, 97–100, 128

psychological barriers 83

public administration 16, 26, 32, 42–43, 49, 55, 89, 105, 107, 120, 129, 131

public funds 16, 18

public servants 6, 9, 79

publicity 96

public–private partnerships 11

Q

quality 4, 21, 98–100, 104

R

radio 65, 87

readers v–vi, 65

real estate 50, 58, 76, 79, 82, 104, 106

realization 3–4, 24, 61–62, 85, 99, 115, 121, 132

recentralization 98–90, 92–93

recentralize 22, 93

redistribution 51

reformers 10, 22, 24, 46, 68, 70

regime 4, 13, 23, 36, 38–39, 57, 59, 61, 68, 73–74, 81, 95–97, 100, 125

region 11, 44, 51, 57, 104, 114, 120, 128

regulations 15, 21, 31, 49, 53, 76–78, 80, 98

reports 51, 94, 127, 129

representative(s) 3, 27, 40, 51, 56–57, 65, 69, 76, 82, 84, 92, 101, 108, 116–117, 122–123, 127

requirement 42, 47, 63

research v, 15, 21, 26, 32–33, 38, 40, 57, 67–71, 77, 84–85, 93, 107–109, 116, 120, 127, 129, 131

resistance 14–15, 20, 23–24, 26, 37–38, 44–46, 55, 61, 70, 73, 76, 89, 93, 100

resources 7–9, 11–12, 16–17, 21, 26, 59, 62, 94, 100, 113, 116, 120–121

responsibility(ies) 3, 5–8, 10–12, 16, 18, 26, 46, 54–56, 58–60, 65, 78–80, 82–83, 85, 95, 97–99, 103, 105, 109, 113, 119, 124, 128,

results vi, 4, 9–16, 19–25, 37–38, 42, 44, 46, 49, 55, 59, 61, 63, 65, 68, 70–71, 74, 76–77, 80–81, 84, 90, 94, 97, 107–108, 114, 117, 119–122, 124–125

risk 20, 37, 42, 44–45, 51, 70, 74–75, 77, 88, 94, 97–98, 107, 115, 122

road map 45

roads 15, 48, 50, 81

round table 127, 131

S

schools 7, 16, 50, 77, 79–80, 105, 107, 116, 120, 129

science 70–71, 107

scope 8, 12, 17–19, 25–26, 38, 42, 44, 47–49, 51, 54, 56, 59, 61, 68, 73, 75, 78–82, 85, 87–90, 95, 106, 116

self-governance v, 4–5, 12–14, 22, 25–26, 54–55, 61.62, 65, 84, 88, 95, 101–102, 108, 113, 118–119, 129

seminar 67, 84, 109, 116, 123

Senate 36, 48, 127–128, 132

services 12–13, 18, 20, 47, 49–50, 58, 66, 73, 76–77, 79–81, 84–85, 87, 90, 94, 99, 102, 104, 106, 109, 121

skills 9, 40, 46, 58, 61, 66, 70, 80, 83–85, 99–100, 105–107, 114, 118, 120, 124

Slovakia 12

Solidarity 17, 127, 131

solution 42, 47, 51, 55, 64–65, 74, 78, 83, 92–93, 108–109

spa 18–19

speed 9, 15, 74, 116, 125

stabilization 10, 44, 95

state-owned enterprises 81, 99–100

status 6, 8, 16, 19, 23, 38–39, 71, 81
statutes 5, 76–78, 80
steering unit 53, 55–56, 58, 68, 75–78, 92–94
strengthening 10, 90, 93–94, 101, 103
study 57, 67, 84
success v–vi, 4, 7, 10, 14, 16, 18, 20–25, 46, 53,
57–58, 62–63, 65, 83–85, 96–97, 99, 113,
115, 118
supplement 74

T

teachers 16–17
team 48, 56, 77, 104
television 65
theory 74
think tank 107
tolerance 98
town 11, 58, 103–104
trade unions 16–17, 19–20, 76, 127
tradition 10–12, 17, 52, 69, 101, 103, 114
training 58, 60, 65–67, 77, 83–84, 99–100,
105–106, 109, 116, 118–121, 124, 129
transfer 6, 9, 11, 13, 17, 19, 50–52, 58, 65, 69,
76–79, 81–85, 91, 100
transformation 3, 10, 14, 17, 25, 31–32, 41–44,
54, 56, 59, 61, 66, 70–71, 75, 77–78, 81,
83, 87–88, 94, 96–98, 100–101, 105, 108,
120, 122
transparency 94, 96, 98
trust 3, 10–11, 15, 23, 25, 43, 49, 63, 113, 115

U

UN 123, 129
United States 69, 121
university 108, 117, 131–132
USAID 115

V

value 15, 46, 100–101, 103, 114
village 52, 103
visit abroad 57, 67, 84, 113, 116, 118–120
voivod 44
voivodship 117

W

Warsaw 132
watchdog 102
water supply 12, 50, 81

A Practical Guide to Building Local Government is a concise and comprehensive account of the two waves of decentralization reforms that led to the establishment of a vibrant system of local government in Poland. Jerzy Regulski, a leading figure in Poland's transition from martial law to democracy and president of the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy, outlines what needs to be done to rebuild the political and administrative establishment when the opportunity for reform arises. This guide devotes the majority of its contents to the tasks and tools of the reform implementation process, offering numerous examples from Poland's experience as well as valuable advice on how the advocates and supporters of local governance can successfully implement those changes that will accomplish the reform. The last portion of the guide critically turns to the role of foreign assistance and guidelines to how best put foreign assistance to domestic use. Outstanding in its candor about the reform process, this book shares the solutions, as well as obstacles, to fulfilling fundamental democratic rights where local governance and decision-making holds both citizens and public officials accountable for fair and effective local democracy.



Local Government
and Public Service
Reform Initiative



OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE



ISBN 978-963-9719-19-4

